

ICANN | GAC

Governmental Advisory Committee

Mumbai, India, 16 March 2026

GAC Communiqué – Mumbai, India¹

The Mumbai Communiqué was drafted and agreed in a hybrid setting, during the ICANN85 Community Forum. The GAC’s discussions during this public meeting are reflected in the GAC Meeting Minutes and the transcripts of all sessions, available at <https://gac.ican.org/meetings-records/>. The Communiqué was circulated to the GAC immediately after the meeting to provide an opportunity for all GAC Members and Observers to consider it before publication, bearing in mind the special circumstances of a hybrid meeting. No objections were raised during the agreed timeframe before publication.

I. Introduction

The Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) met in Mumbai, India, in a hybrid setting, from 7 to 12 March 2026.

Seventy (70) GAC Members and nine (9) Observers attended the meeting.

The GAC meeting was conducted as part of the ICANN85 Community Forum. All GAC plenary and working group sessions were conducted as open meetings.

The Governmental Advisory Committee mourns the loss of Suzanne Radell, a longtime Senior Policy Advisor with the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration who, beginning in 2003, served as the U.S. Government’s GAC representative for more than 15 years. Suzanne was highly respected within the ICANN community, forged strong relationships with ICANN colleagues around the world, and worked closely with government representatives to champion ICANN policies that protected the public interest. When thorny issues arose in the GAC, Suzanne would convene side meetings with colleagues to brainstorm constructive paths forward to achieve consensus. Suzanne will be remembered as a consummate leader who inspired others with her dedication, wit, and commitment to multistakeholder Internet governance. She is keenly missed by many in the ICANN community, who were fortunate enough to know her.

¹ To access previous GAC Advice, whether on the same or other topics, past GAC communiqués are available at: <https://gac.icann.org/>

II. Inter-Constituency Activities and Community Engagement

Meeting with the ICANN Board

The GAC met with the ICANN Board and discussed:

- ICANN contributions to the implementation of the WSIS+20 outcomes
- GAC participation and interests in the Review of Reviews Cross Community Group process
- Future GAC Contributions to the ICANN Nominating Committee
- Registration Data Request Service (RDRS) and Standardized System for Access and Disclosure (SSAD)
- Urgent Requests for Disclosure of Registration Data and Law Enforcement Authentication
- Accuracy of Registration Data
- Mandatory DNS Abuse Reporting by Registries and Registrars
- Root Server Governance

Meeting with the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)

The GAC met with members of the ALAC and discussed:

- Latin Script Diacritics (Linguistic Inclusion)
- Government Expectations and End-User Harm related to DNS Abuse
- Applicant Support Program (ASP)
- WSIS+20 and global digital governance processes

Meeting with the Address Supporting Organization (ASO)

The GAC met with members of the ASO and discussed revisions to the Governance Document for the Recognition, Operation, and Derecognition of Regional Internet Registries.

Meeting with the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF)

The GAC met with participants of the IETF and discussed:

- IETF within the Internet Governance Ecosystem
- Interaction with ICANN
- Emerging and Ongoing Work
- Engaging with IETF/ISOC
- Government engagement with the IETF

Meeting with the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)

The GAC met with members of the GNSO Council and discussed:

- DNS Abuse
- RDRS and SSAD Recommendations
- Urgent Requests for Disclosure of Registration Data
- Human Rights Impact Assessments

Meeting with the Review of Reviews Cross Community Group (Reviews CCG)

The GAC met with members of the Reviews CCG, was updated on the group's work and discussed the draft design proposal submitted by the group for community discussion at ICANN85.

Meeting with the Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC)

The GAC met with members of the RSSAC leadership and discussed the role of the RSSAC and the DNS Root Server System more generally.

Cross Community Discussions

GAC Members participated in relevant cross-community sessions scheduled as part of ICANN85, including: ICANN's Role in the Future of Internet Resilience, the Review of Reviews, and WSIS+20 Lessons Learned and Next Steps.

III. Internal Matters

1. Rob Hoggarth

The GAC expresses its sincere appreciation and thanks to Rob Hoggarth for his longstanding contributions and years of dedicated engagement with the Committee. The GAC thanks Rob for his unwavering support and collegial collaboration with the GAC, which will be greatly missed, and wishes him the very best in his retirement.

2. GAC Membership

There are currently 184 GAC Member States and Territories, and 41 Observer Organizations.

2. GAC Elections

The 2026 election process for GAC Chair will be initiated shortly after the ICANN85 meeting. The initial nomination period will close on 24 April 2026. If needed, a voting process will be conducted from 18 May to 10 June 2026, ending during the ICANN86 meeting, at which time the election results will be announced.

The term of the next GAC Chair will start at the end of ICANN87, for a duration of 2 years, renewable twice².

3. GAC Leadership

The GAC thanks its outgoing Vice-Chairs, Thiago Dal-Toe (Colombia) and Christine Arida (Egypt) for their valuable support and contribution to the GAC during two one-year terms.

The end of the ICANN85 meeting marks the start of a new term for the incoming GAC-Vice Chairs, to last until the close of ICANN90 in October 2027³:

Ian Sheldon (Australia)

Zeina Bou Harb (Lebanon)

Marco Hogewoning (The Netherlands)

Jorge Cancio (Switzerland)

Gloria Katuuku (Uganda)

² The terms of GAC Chair and Vice-Chairs are defined in GAC Operating Principle 21 and 31 which were revised on 10 June 2025. See <https://gac.icann.org/operating-principles/operating-principles-june-2025>

³ *ibid.*

4. GAC Working Groups

- **GAC Public Safety Working Group (PSWG)**

The GAC PSWG continued its work to advocate for improved measures to combat DNS Abuse and promote lawful, effective access to domain name registration data. The PSWG contributed to the GAC sessions pertaining to DNS Abuse and Registration Data issues, and the GAC bilateral meeting with the GNSO Council where it discussed Law Enforcement Authentication tools relevant to the ongoing community discussions on Urgent Requests for non-public registration data. The PSWG also participated in panel discussions organized by the ALAC and the Contracted Parties House of the GNSO, including regarding the criminal use of Domain Generation Algorithms (DGAs). Finally, and alongside GAC Members, the PSWG engaged with community stakeholders in meetings of the newly convened GNSO Policy Development Process Working Group on Associated Domain Checks, as a part of policy development on DNS Abuse mitigation.

- **GAC Underserved Regions Working Group (USRWG)**

The GAC Underserved Regions Working Group (USRWG) continued its efforts to promote the effective participation of governments from underserved and developing regions within the ICANN ecosystem. The Working Group focuses on identifying barriers that limit participation in ICANN policy development processes and exploring practical measures to strengthen engagement, capacity development, and representation of governments from underserved regions.

On Day 1 of ICANN85, the USRWG facilitated two capacity development sessions on the Next Round of New gTLDs focused on GAC readiness including:

- Application Timeline
- Publicly Available Information
- Different gTLD Application Types
- Actions GAC Members and Observers can take in relation to New gTLD Applications
- Resources available to support the GAC, Community and Applicants
- Overview of key issues and developments related to the Registry Service Provider (RSP) Program and the Applicant Support Program (ASP) to prepare GAC Members for the upcoming Facilitated Dialogue at ICANN86 on the relationship between these Programs.

The Working Group discussed ongoing initiatives to support awareness and participation of governments from developing regions in key ICANN policy processes. The Working Group will continue to collaborate with other GAC Working Groups and the ICANN community to advance initiatives that enhance inclusivity and meaningful participation of underserved regions in ICANN activities.

- **GAC Universal Acceptance and IDN Working Group (UA-IDN WG)**

As part of its continuing revitalization, the UA-IDN Working Group conducted a session during ICANN85 that featured updates on Universal Acceptance efforts from UNESCO, including a review of the recent UNESCO–ICANN Policy Brief drafting efforts.

The GAC plenary session on this matter also provided a preview of planning efforts for UA Day 2026 and reviewed progress made since the launch of UA Day initiatives in 2023. In addition, participants explored guidelines published by the UA Expert Working Group that were recently released for public comment, and reviewed ongoing work on UA-related matters within the Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO). The discussion also examined the role of governments in promoting UA, providing an opportunity to learn from government experiences to date. GAC delegates exchanged views on key leadership opportunities available to them within their respective countries, including case studies from India and Bahrain.

The GAC welcomes UNESCO’s renewed engagement in the activities of the Committee and highlights the valuable contribution this international organization can make toward advancing the GAC’s objectives, including the enhancement of linguistic and cultural diversity on the Internet. In this context, the GAC Human Rights and International Law Working Group (HRILWG) looks forward to further discussions on UNESCO Internet Universality Indicators considering the promotion of diversity, consistent with ICANN’s Core Values.

5. High Level Government Meeting (HLGM)

The GAC welcomes the invitation from the Sultanate of Oman for Member governments and Observer organizations to take part in the next High-Level Government Meeting (HLGM) in Muscat on 18 October 2026. This meeting will be held during the ICANN87 Annual General Meeting scheduled for 17-23 October 2026, offering opportunities for high-level participation throughout the ICANN meeting.

The GAC discussed topics of interest to be considered in the agenda of the HLGM, which will be developed in collaboration between the GAC and the host, with the support of ICANN’s Government Engagement team. A GAC webinar is expected to be scheduled intersessionally to continue these discussions and ensure that a preliminary agenda can be shared with invitations to be sent before ICANN86.

6. GAC Readiness for the Next Round of New gTLDs

The GAC continues its readiness activities in preparation for the Next Round of New gTLDs opening in April 2026. The GAC held two targeted capacity development sessions to prepare GAC Members and Observers for their review and evaluation of new gTLD applications. This included the review of a workbook developed by ICANN org to provide foundational understanding of Community Input timelines and actions relevant to GAC Members and Observers. The GAC continued discussions of its

process to submit GAC Early Warnings that will be finalized prior to the launch of the Next Round, which includes consideration of the time needed for the GAC Chair and GAC Support staff to process and transmit Early Warnings to ICANN org. Furthermore, it was requested that said workbook be complemented with plain and digestible information about the possibility for GAC Members and Observers of using the Objections provided for by the Applicant Guidebook (AGB).

The GAC discussed holding a call before ICANN86 during which GAC Members and Observers will have the opportunity to exchange information on their respective approaches to conducting gTLD Application reviews. Lastly, the GAC would welcome intersessional opportunities during the GAC Early Warning period to support further capacity-building and exchanges of views.

IV. Issues of Importance to the GAC

1. Domain Name Registration Data

a. Urgent Requests for Disclosure of Registration Data

The GAC is pleased that the Board agrees to a 24-hour timeline for Contracted Parties to respond to authenticated Urgent Requests and looks forward to the amendment of the Registration Data Policy to integrate this timeline developed by the Implementation Review Team (IRT). The Board's decision is in line with GAC Advice from ICANN79 and Follow-Up on Previous Advice from ICANN80. The GAC appreciates the cooperation with the GNSO Council and the work by the ICANN community on this crucial issue. The GAC however notes that the 24-hour timeline for Contracted Parties to respond to authenticated Urgent Requests will remain contingent upon establishment of a law enforcement authentication mechanism. The GAC appreciates the ongoing collaboration of ICANN org with the Public Safety Working Group (PSWG) to finalize law enforcement authentication mechanisms. The GAC recognizes the community's participation in the dedicated Practitioners Group.

The GAC urges the ICANN Board and GNSO to quickly determine the most effective way to proceed with implementing authentication mechanisms for Urgent Requests. The GAC reiterates its position that a new Policy Development Process (PDP) is unnecessary, since the implementation and use of an authentication mechanism is part of the overall implementation process associated with the Registration Data Policy. Given the vital public safety interests involved in Urgent Requests, a new PDP would unduly delay further progress on this issue.

b. Registration Data Request Service (RDRS) and Policy Recommendations for a System for Standardized Access/Disclosure (SSAD)

The GAC appreciates the Board’s decision to enable the development of Supplemental Recommendations informed by the experience of the Registration Data Request Service (RDRS), the findings of the RDRS Standing Committee Final Report, and the RDRS Policy Alignment Analysis. The GAC notes that this approach appears to provide the most appropriate path to advance work on a permanent and improved system without initiating a new Policy Development Process.

The GAC reiterates its view that ICANN should move toward a permanent, centralized and globally accessible mechanism to channel registration data requests, and that participation by gTLD registrars should be mandatory to ensure the usefulness, effectiveness and completeness of such a mechanism for requestors. The GAC also encourages timely consideration of appropriate participation models for affiliated privacy and proxy services and continues to support efforts to explore voluntary participation by ccTLDs.

The GAC encourages the ICANN Board and GNSO Council to proceed expeditiously with the Supplemental Recommendations process and to develop clear timelines for next steps.

The GAC also welcomes the proposed engagement of the broader community in the Supplemental Recommendations process through the “Small Team Plus” format involving Advisory Committees, and looks forward to participating in this work to ensure that public safety considerations are substantively reflected in the revised recommendations. The GAC further appreciates the assurance provided by the GNSO Council that it aims to complete the Supplemental Recommendations process in a matter of months as opposed to stretching the timeline potentially over a year.

c. Privacy and Proxy Services

The GAC appreciates the work of the Privacy and Proxy Services Accreditation Issues (PPSAI) Implementation Review Team (IRT) toward implementation of the PPSAI recommendations. The GAC welcomes the IRT’s timeline to advance this work during the 2026 calendar year. The GAC intends to follow these efforts and provide input on the process. In addition, the GAC reiterates that the RDRS must address complexities that arise from affiliated Privacy and Proxy services to be fit for purpose.

2. DNS Abuse Mitigation

The ICANN85 DNS Abuse session covered national ccTLD policies, the multistakeholder gTLD policy development process currently underway at ICANN, and a voluntary, multistakeholder initiative to mitigate DNS abuse outside of ICANN. The GAC welcomed a presentation by the host country ccTLD (.in) on its policies to prevent DNS Abuse, as well as the Trusted Notifier Network (TNN), a not-for-profit organization focused on facilitating and operationalizing trusted notifier programs.

GAC Members participated in the inaugural meetings of the GNSO Policy Development Process on Associated Domain Checks, and find that the PDP is off to a good start. The GAC favors shortening the overall timeline of the work and encourages the GNSO Council and ICANN org to regularly assess whether project milestones are being achieved. The GAC expects that the narrow scope of the PDP will yield rapid results, so that it can be treated as a “blueprint” for effective policy development at ICANN going forward.

Concerning future work on DNS Abuse, beyond PDP2 (Safeguards for Application Programming Interface – API – access to new customers) and a coordination mechanism for combating Domain Generation Algorithm (DGA) Botnet attacks, the GAC recalls the importance of also addressing the other critical gaps identified in the Issue Report. Transparency of reporting, underuse of predictive algorithms for early detection, subdomain abuse, and reducing the time for registrant contact verification remain particularly important issues for the GAC. The Committee welcomes the indication from the GNSO Council that it is developing a methodology to prioritize these policy gaps, and would appreciate further details as soon as possible.

The GAC expresses its strong interest in engaging further with the Board and the Contracted Parties on how to address – in a swift and effective manner – the current 15-day timeline for registrars to validate and verify registrants contact information. As the INFERMAL study notes, when the validation of registrant information takes place during the account creation or before the domain purchase, it is associated with a 70% decrease in malicious registrations. To mitigate DNS Abuse, verification of registrant contact information should take place before a newly registered domain name can become accessible through the DNS. A possible path to be further explored in this regard is contract amendments, and the GAC will continue to consider the best path for efficient implementation.

The GAC also encourages ICANN to explore the establishment of a centralized reporting mechanism managed by ICANN for the periodic reporting of DNS Abuse complaints received by registrars and registries, including the number of complaints and actions taken. Such reporting would help provide a clearer understanding of abuse trends, improve transparency, and support more effective policy responses.

Finally, the GAC recognizes the importance of voluntary collaborative initiatives on DNS Abuse mitigation practices beyond ICANN’s remit, given their flexibility in addressing real-world issues, and encourages the community on a voluntary basis to continue exploring paths for such collaboration, including in the context of trusted notifier schemes.

The GAC reiterates its commitment to cooperate with the ICANN community, through policy development and capacity building, to make progress on addressing DNS Abuse.

3. Next Round of New gTLDs

a. Applicant Support Program

The GAC welcomes the ICANN Board's update regarding the Applicant Support Program (ASP) and is encouraged by the receipt of 75 applications spanning all five ICANN regions.

The GAC expresses its strong support for the Board's proposal to allocate the necessary additional funds from the proceeds from the 2012 round of new gTLDs. Expanding the funding envelope to accommodate up to 75 qualified applicants—well beyond the originally budgeted 45—directly aligns with the GAC's long-standing advocacy for maximizing diverse participation in the Next Round of New gTLDs.

However, the GAC emphasizes that increasing the *number* of supported applicants must not compromise the *depth* of financial assistance originally proposed. The GAC recommends that this budget expansion should fully preserve the ability to apply the maximum base fee reduction of 85% to all qualified ASP applicants.

The GAC also encourages continued transparency regarding the evaluation, implementation, and outcomes of the ASP.

b. Community Applications

The GAC notes that ICANN org will decide which vendor will conduct Community Priority Evaluation (CPE) for the Next Round of New gTLDs. The GAC welcomes the announcement by ICANN org that the CPE evaluation guidelines will be opened for public comment. The GAC will follow the process closely as the successful implementation of CPE will be impactful for the involvement of communities in the Domain Name System.

c. TLD Application Management System

The GAC thanks ICANN org for the timely release and previews of the TLD Application Management System (TAMS), which represents an important step toward facilitating the submission and management of applications in the upcoming round.

To support GAC members and Observers in carrying out their responsibilities during the application review period, the GAC encourages ICANN to provide dedicated intersessional sessions prior to ICANN86 explaining how GAC Members and Observers will be able to access the publicly available information that will allow for review of the applications. The GAC asks for these tools to allow for search and download options that would increase the efficiency of the application reviews by GAC members.

4. UDRP Review

The GAC welcomed a presentation from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the Internet Commerce Association (ICA) on their independent joint report on the UDRP review. The GAC understands that work by the GNSO on this review is on the horizon. The GAC suggests that the GNSO consider using the WIPO-ICA report as a resource to frame the upcoming UDRP review and identify pending issues for further discussion.

5. Governance of the Regional Internet Registries

The GAC welcomed the update from the Address Supporting Organization (ASO) regarding the drafting of the Governance Document for the Recognition, Operation, and Derecognition of Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) (“RIR Governance Document”).

The GAC noted that the RIR Governance Document remains under development and that the final version is still being drafted. In this regard, the GAC encourages that the issues raised during GAC deliberations be duly taken into account in the preparation of the final document and communicated to the RIR Governance drafting process. These include, among others, the importance for the RIRs to operate their policies in the public interest, including the continued stewardship of Internet number resources in an efficient and transparent manner, and monitoring and auditing of RIRs performance according to objective and measurable operational criteria.

The GAC emphasizes that any processes related to the governance of the RIRs should comply with ICANN’s existing multistakeholder approach.

The GAC is looking forward to reviewing the final outcome document as part of the process for approval and adoption of an updated ICANN policy on Governance of the Regional Internet Registries.

6. Root Server System

The GAC welcomed the overview provided by the Root Server Stability Advisory Committee (RSSAC) about the structure of the DNS Root Server System and the stability and resilience of the service which the diverse group of Root Server Operators (RSOs) has delivered since the inception of the DNS.

The GAC is keen to continue the conversation with RSSAC, the RSOs and the Root Server System Governance Working Group (RSSGWG) about the ongoing efforts both in technological development and governance to ensure the stability and resilience of the DNS Root System in an ever changing and expanding ecosystem. In particular, the GAC would like to learn more about current and future frameworks on incident detection, mitigation and reporting, and how those are used to provide learnings for future enhancements in risk modelling and mitigation within the various organizations involved in operating the Root Server System.

7. Review of Reviews

The GAC is still discussing the draft design proposal giving consideration to the GAC's unique status in the ICANN Bylaws and existing Operating Principles. The GAC welcomes the Cross Community Group (CCG) outreach and inclusiveness efforts, allowing active participation by observers and reaching out to members and chairs of past Review Teams, and welcomes the approach followed so far, maintaining successes of past reviews, building on work of ATRT3 and being forward looking for sustainability.

The GAC will continue to participate in the CCG, with special interest in:

- How important reviews – such as the Security, Stability, and Resiliency (SSR) Review and the Competition, Consumer Trust, and Consumer Choice (CCT) Review that are closely linked to the ICANN's mission established in the Bylaws – will be accommodated in the refreshed proposal;
- How the overall cadence and workload will look like after compiling all reviews on one timeline;
- How the final proposal will be driven by a functional approach, taking care that each review has a distinct function and a clear added-value, be mindful of resources, and be communicated in clear, plain language, enabling those unfamiliar with ICANN to understand how the review system works.

V. Next Meeting

The GAC is scheduled to meet next during the ICANN86 Policy Forum on 8-11 June 2026.