

High-Level Government Meeting

Frequently Asked Questions

Date: 19 March 2024

What is ICANN?

ICANN stands for the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers. ICANN's mission is to help ensure a stable, secure, and unified global Internet. To reach another person on the Internet, you need to type an address – a name or a number – into your computer or other device. That address must be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN helps coordinate and support these unique identifiers across the world. ICANN was formed in 1998 as a nonprofit public-benefit corporation with a community of participants from all over the world. For more information about ICANN, please visit: www.icann.org

What is ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee?

The Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) serves as the voice of governments and Intergovernmental Organizations in ICANN's multistakeholder representative structure. The committee's key role is to provide advice to ICANN on issues of public policy, especially where there may be an interaction between ICANN's activities or policies and national laws or international agreements. GAC members discuss issues with the ICANN Board and other ICANN Supporting Organizations, Advisory Committees, and other groups and deliver regular Advice. For more information about the GAC, please visit: <https://gac.icann.org/>

What are High-Level Government Meetings at ICANN?

High-Level Government Meetings (HLGMs) are events hosted, organized, and implemented by a GAC member government in conjunction with the GAC and ICANN. HLGMs at ICANN are crucial gatherings that underscore the vital role governments play in advising the ICANN Board on public policy issues that are crucial for the secure and stable operation of the Domain Name System (DNS). These meetings serve multiple purposes: to clarify the role of governments within ICANN's processes, especially the GAC; to facilitate high-level discussions on current public policy challenges involving governments and ICANN leadership; to introduce ICANN and its mission to top administrative and elected officials, enhancing their understanding of and engagement with ICANN; and to engage governments and administrations not currently active in the GAC or other ICANN forums.

Who attends High-Level Government Meetings at ICANN?

HLGM attendees typically include invited senior representatives from governments and international organizations around the world that have an interest in policies governing the Domain Name System. Specific attendees might include members of the GAC, senior government officials, and policy experts.

Who is the host of the ICANN80 Kigali HLGGM on 9 June 2024 in Kigali, Rwanda?

The host of the ICANN80 HLGGM is the Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of ICT and Innovation. The HLGGM Meeting Chair is the Honorable Paula INGABIRE, Minister of ICT and Innovation.

When is this year's meeting scheduled?

The meeting is scheduled for Sunday, 9 June 2024. A reception for delegates and invited guests from the ICANN multistakeholder community will follow the meeting.

Where is the meeting being held?

The meeting will take place in Kigali, Rwanda, in conjunction with the 80th ICANN Public Meeting at the Kigali Convention Centre (KCC). It will be conducted in the auditorium of the KCC.

How often do HLGGMs occur?

As originally envisioned, HLGGMs would take place on a regular cycle, typically once every two years. Within that envisioned cycle, one of the GAC member countries steps forward to host a HLGGM in conjunction with an ICANN Public Meeting. The Public Meetings are held three times a year in different regions of the world to encourage global participation.

Are HLGGMs open to the public?

Yes. Although nongovernment representatives are not permitted to participate in the HLGGM, when venue space permits, dedicated seating is made available for nongovernmental attendees to observe the proceedings. HLGGM sessions are recorded and transcribed, and the records are made available on the GAC website.

What are the outcomes of HLGGMs?

The HLGGM Chair typically produces a Chair's Report after the meeting that summarizes the event and captures notable discussions and accomplishments.

Where have previous HLGGMs been held?

To date, High-Level Government Meetings have been hosted by several GAC members, including Canada at ICANN45 in Toronto in October 2012, the United Kingdom at ICANN50 in London in June 2014, the Kingdom of Morocco at ICANN55 in Marrakech in February 2016, and Spain at ICANN63 in Barcelona in October 2018. A comprehensive Chair's Report summarizing the discussions and outcomes is available for each meeting.

Why the five-year gap?

The HLGGM meeting cycle was disrupted due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The committee is grateful that the Republic of Rwanda has stepped forward to begin a new cycle of high-level events.

What topics will be discussed at the ICANN80 HLGGM?

Preliminary topics identified by the host and GAC members for potential HLGGM meeting discussions include:

1. Introductory Session/Scene Setting/Context:

Overview discussion of ICANN and the Multistakeholder Model, including:

- ICANN's evolution
- The role of the GAC
- Accomplishments of the multistakeholder community over the last 25 years
- Emerging technologies that may impact future DNS policy development
- A general overview of the HLGGM agenda/program.

2. Cooperation and Governance:

Discussion of the future of Internet governance (e.g., Global Digital Compact, WSIS+20, Summit for the Future). This topic area will highlight ICANN's role in the ecosystem and allow for discussion of such topics as cybersecurity, DNS abuse, Internet fragmentation, and the value of the single Internet ecosystem.

This topic area also will enable exploration of how the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), ICANN, and the U.N. can bring various policy programs together to help governments deliver on their national aspirations.

3. Digital Inclusion:

Potential discussion of open Internet and meaningful connectivity, Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and Universal Acceptance, multilingualism, the next round of new generic top-level domains applications, country code top-level domains (ccTLDs), and the development of digital economies in Africa and other underserved regions (e.g., the Coalition for Digital Africa).

Where can I find the agenda for the upcoming HLGGM?

The HLGGM agenda is in development now and will be finalized by the end of March. The final agenda will be posted on the GAC website as soon as it is available.

How can governments contribute to these meetings?

GAC member representatives are coordinating with the meeting host to identify meeting topics and develop the agenda for the meeting. Senior officials who attend the meeting will have the opportunity to speak on and engage in discussions about the various meeting topics. They may share oral or written statements as appropriate, given the time and scope dedicated to each topical issue.

If you have any queries about the upcoming HLGGM, please contact gac-staff@icann.org for assistance.