ICANN | GAC
Governmental Advisory Committee

81 | ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

GAC Meeting with the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)

Session 14

Session Objective

The GAC and the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) regularly meet during ICANN Public Meetings to discuss public policy matters of interest to both government stakeholders and Internet end-users.

Background

The ALAC is the primary ICANN-designated organizational home for the voices and concerns of individual Internet end users. Representing the At-Large Community, the 15-member ALAC consists of two members selected by each of the five Regional At-Large Organizations (RALOs) and five members appointed by ICANN's Nominating Committee. Advocating for the interests of end-users, the ALAC advises on the activities of ICANN, including Internet policies developed by ICANN's Supporting Organizations.

The GAC and ALAC have been meeting at ICANN Public Meetings in order to coordinate and discuss ICANN policy issues of common interest. In the past they have worked to develop joint statements on certain policy and operational topics.

Agenda

At ICANN81, the groups will continue to exchange views on topics of similar interest by focusing on:

1. Introduction and Opening Remarks
2. WSIS+20: Reflections and Future Directions
3. DNS Abuse: Addressing the Challenges (TBC)
4. Open Discussion and Q&A
5. Closing Remarks

Current Status and Perspectives

1. WSIS+20: Reflections and Future Directions

From a merged ALAC and GAC perspective, the focus will be on looking ahead to ensure where possible the outcome of the Review at the UNGA (late 2025) preserves the current multi-stakeholder approaches to IG with the broader goal of promoting user-centric governance at the global level.

Digital Inclusion: Both GAC and ALAC would emphasize the importance of closing the digital divide. Governments aim to ensure that information and communication technologies (ICT) policies are equitable and foster economic development, while ALAC's interests focus on universal access, and ensuring that every individual has the right to participate in the digital world, irrespective of geographic, economic, or social constraints

Multistakeholder Engagement: Both bodies recognize the importance of an inclusive governance model that incorporates input from all stakeholders, including governments, civil society, and individual users. They would advocate for policies that respect national sovereignty while ensuring that end-user rights (ALAC's concern) remain a key consideration in any global Internet governance framework.

UN Internet Governance Forum: A key component of the WSIS+20 Review will be the renewal and the endorsement of the mandate for the UN IGF post 2025. The UN IGF along with the array of National and Regional IGFs has been instrumental for the ICANN Community to explain and discuss what we do.

Security and Privacy: While not specifically a WSIS+20 Review issue it is important that any discussions work towards crafting policies that protect both security and user privacy. Together, they would support a balanced approach where privacy protections are not sacrificed for security needs, and vice versa.

2. Domain Names Abuse (DNS): Addressing the Challenges

In the context of DNS abuse, both GAC and ALAC have overlapping interests in maintaining a secure and trustworthy Internet.

User Protection and National Security: ALAC and the GAC both focus on safeguarding individual users from phishing, malware, and fraud, with the GAC being also concerned with the broader national security implications of DNS abuse, such as preventing cybercrime and protecting critical infrastructure. From a merged perspective, the key priority is creating strong anti-abuse measures that both protect citizens from cyber threats and prevent damage to national and global economies.

Accountability and Enforcement: the GAC is interested in effective enforcement mechanisms that enable DNS actors (like registries and registrars) to be held accountable. ALAC, meanwhile, focusses on transparency and user education, ensuring that users are informed about how to avoid abuse. Both committees therefore share common interest in advocating for clear, enforceable policies that hold DNS operators accountable for preventing and mitigating abusive practices.

Collaboration with Industry: A merged perspective would also recognize the need for closer cooperation between government authorities and private-sector actors (domain registries, law enforcement, etc.). ALAC would insist on user-friendly mechanisms to report abuse, while GAC members seek industry adherence to national and international regulatory frameworks.

From the ALAC and GAC perspective, these topics focus on balancing the protection of end-users and their rights with the government's responsibility to ensure national security, stability, and equitable access to the Internet. They would jointly advocate for strong, user-centered policies that promote multistakeholder collaboration and international cooperation while protecting both national interests and the rights of individual users.

In closing, a merged GAC-ALAC perspective would likely underscore:

- Shared Responsibility: The need for shared responsibility between governments, private entities, and users to ensure that the Internet remains safe, stable, and accessible. This could mean advocating for clear, enforceable regulations to prevent DNS abuse (GAC's focus) and empowering users to protect themselves through better education and resources (ALAC's focus).

- Collaborative Solutions: Both bodies would encourage continued collaboration between governments and the Internet user community, advocating for user-centric policies that also address the legitimate concerns of national security and sovereignty.

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