GAC Operational Matters

Session #4 - Operational Matters (NomCom, Strategic Planning, Working Groups, etc.)

Session Objective

This session is intended to provide time for the committee to discuss a number of operational matters including a report from the GAC Chair to the committee regarding recent chair/vice chair discussion related to future strategic and operational planning by the GAC, a discussion of the GAC's future interactions with the ICANN Nominating Committee, and update reports from a number of GAC Working Groups.

Recent Developments and Session Topics

Working Group Reporting

When appropriate, the GAC devotes time at its public meetings for update reports from the various working groups of the committee. These reports can take written or real time briefing formats.

For the ICANN78 meeting, the GAC Operating Principles Evolution (GOPE) Working Group has asked for time to bring the committee up-to-speed on some of its recent activities and to share information about its work plans for the next year and a half. The GAC's Underserved Regions Working Group (USRWG) is also expected to offer a brief report to the committee about the ICANN78 Capacity Development Workshop and plans for ICANN79.

Exploring the GAC Nominating Committee Role

The ICANN Nominating Committee (NomCom) is an independent committee tasked with identifying and selecting individuals for ICANN leadership positions. The ICANN Bylaws call for the NomCom to make a specified number of appointments each year to the ICANN Board of Directors (Board), the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Council, the Country-Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) Council, and the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC). For years, the GAC has had a reserved non-voting liaison position on the NomCom. However, this position has gone vacant for some years due to a lack of agreement within the committee on the proper role for this position. At one point back in 2015 a GAC Working Group was formed to help facilitate GAC consideration of NomCom participation.

There was an exchange of views on NomCom issues on the GAC e-mail list back in December 2017. Several members indicated support for the GAC taking up its position on the NomCom. Others noted concerns about the NomCom's requirement for confidentiality, which was raised as possibly creating problems of accountability and transparency for the GAC. While this issue was discussed

several times in the GAC over the past years, there was never any GAC-wide consensus on the matter.

As of the GAC's ICANN62 Panama City meeting (2018) there was no consensus in the GAC on whether the GAC should resume the position available to it on the NomCom. Consequently, the GAC agreed on developing public policy-focused criteria to be submitted annually to the NomCom as guidance it could use in selecting appointees to the ICANN Board. Since that time, every year the GAC has shared essentially similar criteria, in place of the committee appointing an individual to serve on the NomCom. The committee has made sure to emphasize that the lack of a GAC appointment in any given year to the NOmCom should not create an assumption that no future appointments will be made.

With several new changes now coming to the way the NomCom will operate in the future – including the transformation of the GAC and other community NomCom positions from non-voting to voting roles, the question has been raised whether circumstances have changed enough over the last several years to warrant a possible change in the perception of committee members on this issue.

When the ICANN Board Chair reached out earlier this year to ask the GAC and other community groups to share thoughts about potential NomCom rebalancing and other issues, it was suggested that the GAC discuss the matter collectively at ICANN78.

GAC Chair Update on Strategic and Operational Planning

Back in May of this year, the GAC Chair alerted Members via email that the GAC Chair and Vice Chairs have been exploring ideas to improve the efficiencies of the GAC operations and discussing manners in which the committee could engage in more extensive annual and longer-term strategic and operational planning. As he explained at the time, three main themes are currently driving their strategic thinking in this area including – (1) leveraging opportunities for GAC participants to effectively prepare for public meetings and contribute substantively to hybrid meeting discussions; (2) encouraging more vocal contributions from a wider variety of GAC members during hybrid meetings; and (3) finding time for everyone who wants to contribute during hybrid meetings.

Since that time, the GAC Chair and vice chairs have met to discuss potential methods and directions that might help the committee consider a number of strategic issues. During this session at ICANN78, the GAC Chair will share an update with attendees on the progress of the discussions and the timing for involving all committee members in the strategic conversations.

Key Reference Documents

- GAC Chair Letter to ICANN Board Chair Regarding NomCom Rebalancing - 30 June 2023 - https://gac.icann.org/contentMigrated/gac-reply-to-26-april-board-nomcom-rebalancing-inquiry
- ICANN Board Chair Letter to GAC Chair Regarding NomCom Rebalancing - 23 April 2023 - https://gac.icann.org/advice/correspondence/incoming/20230426/nominating-committee-nomcom-rebalancing
- Example of annual GAC Criteria shared with the ICANN Nominating Committee (2019) - https://gac.icann.org/publications/NomCom%202020%20GAC%20Criteria%20(Nov2019)(Final).pdf
- Responses to NomCom Review Implementation Working Group Questions about GAC Appointments to the NomCom - (November 2019) - https://gac.icann.org/publications/NomCom%202020%20GAC%20Criteria%20(Nov2019)(Final).pdf

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