

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**ICANN81 Annual General Meeting, 09-14 November 2024**

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## 1. MEETING ATTENDANCE & MEMBERSHIP

83 GAC Members and 8 Observers attended the meeting.

GAC membership currently stands at 183 Member States and Territories, and 39 Observer Organizations. A list of ICANN81 GAC meeting Member and Observer attendees is provided in Attachment 1 - ICANN81 Hybrid Annual General Meeting - GAC ATTENDEES LIST.

The ICANN81 GAC Communiqué is published on the GAC website at:

<https://gac.icann.org/contentMigrated/icann81-istanbul-communicue>.

Presentations used by speakers during the meeting and supporting briefings prepared for the GAC can be accessed from the GAC website at:

<https://gac.icann.org/agendas/icann81-hybrid-meeting-agenda>.

Full transcripts for each meeting session are to be made available from the [ICANN81 Public Meeting website](#), via the relevant agenda items on the GAC's website agenda page listed above.

## 1.1. Opening Plenary Session

The GAC Chair, Nicolas Caballero, opened the GAC public meeting at ICANN81 by welcoming in-person and virtual attendees to the meeting. He thanked the host Türkiye government for its planning and implementation of the meeting. He noted a number of significant geopolitical and DNS activities on the radar of GAC members at ICANN81 including, the next round of new gTLDs, the WSIS+20, and GAC priority issues including DNS abuse mitigation, WHOIS and data transparency, and the importance of balancing considerations of transparency and privacy.

The Chair ceded the floor to Meltem Ergün of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority of Türkiye (ICTA) who welcomed attendees to the GAC Meeting.

The GAC Chair then provided an overview of GAC meeting agenda highlights for the next six days and gave GAC Support staff the opportunity to provide an overview of the logistical aspect of the meeting for both in-person and remote attendees.

Subsequently, the committee conducted its traditional Tour de Table – giving all delegates (attending in person and virtually) the opportunity to identify themselves and their affiliations and to offer brief remarks on topics of their choosing.

Upon the conclusion of the Tour de Table, the GAC Support staff offered an overview of the drafting and production process for the GAC Communique and attending delegates were encouraged to offer their input as early as possible.

The Chair thanked everyone and adjourned the session.

## 2. PUBLIC POLICY AND SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

### 2.1. New gTLDs Next Round

The GAC held two plenary sessions on the new gTLD program next round, and specifically focused on priority topics including the Applicant Support Program, a status update on the Implementation Review Team (IRT), GAC priority topics and ICANN org updates and discussion.

GAC Vice-Chair, Nigel Hickson, introduced the sessions by providing an overview of the IRT, noting it is the vehicle for translating all the work on the policies and agreements of various community groups on the new gTLD program into the Applicant Guidebook (AGB).

On **the Implementation Review Team (IRT)**, the GAC representative on the IRT and ICANN org presented recent developments pertaining to this effort. ICANN org reviewed the timeline for the path to the next and future rounds of new gTLDs, noting that the current date for the opening of the application window is anticipated as April 2026. ICANN org noted the ongoing work being carried out in relation to ensuring readiness for the imminent launch of two programs expected to open on 19 November 2024: the Applicant Support Program and the Registry Service Provider Evaluation Program. ICANN org noted that the launch of these two programs post ICANN81

indicates the first steps into the next round of new gTLDs, and will help set forth a process for the launch of the application window.

Another public comment proceeding is anticipated to open for AGB language in December, followed by a possible subsequent one in the January or February timeframe, in preparation for the entire AGB to be released for public comment. GAC members were reminded that the entire AGB will go through a final round of Public Comment prior to the launch of the Next Round.

The AGB is anticipated to be published no later than December 2025, in preparation for the launch of the next round in April 2026.

On **Applicant Support**, GAC topic leads reviewed recent developments pertaining to the Applicant Support Program (ASP), in particular following the GAC/Board consultation process which stemmed from ICANN80 advice on the ASP. Topic leads addressed timely items pertaining to the ASP, including the application and evaluation fees and the Outreach, Engagement and Communications.

On the **ASP application and evaluation fees**, GAC members took note of the [announcement](#) of the application and evaluation fee for the next round of new gTLD applications expected to be USD \$227,000 subject to formal approval by the ICANN Board upon the adoption of the Applicant Guidebook. The GAC further notes that the maximum fee waiver percentage (85%) will result in an approximate application fee of USD \$34,050 for ASP supported applicants. Consistent with previous GAC Advice in the ICANN79 San Juan Communiqué and the ICANN77 Washington D.C. Communiqué urging the reduction or waiving of fees to the maximum extent possible, this figure may still be too prohibitive for many prospective applicants from underserved regions, particularly when combined with additional costs and fees. Accordingly, this may constitute a major challenge for applicants from these regions, thereby threatening the ASP's objective of facilitating global diversification and inclusion within the new gTLD Program.

GAC members discussed potential ways of mitigating these concerns, specifically by urging ICANN org to:

- Build awareness of the new gTLD Program and the ASP among traditional financial institutions and the investment community in all targeted countries.
- Engage with development financing agencies (e.g. the World Bank and Regional Development Banks), donor/grant funding organizations, and similar entities, to promote awareness of the benefits of the New gTLD Program.
- Facilitate “matchmaking” between financing or funding entities and potential applicants with a view to providing financial assistance for ASP supported applicants.

ICANN org provided an update on the **ASP Outreach, Engagement and Communications**, noting that in 2024 ICANN org focused engagement efforts exclusively in underserved or developing regions. ICANN org identified target organizations from the categories who are eligible for the ASP, and conferred with community leaders in their regions to identify how to refine or expand these target lists. Outreach was conducted directly via calls, and events, and included supporting materials. ICANN org encouraged GAC members to familiarize themselves with the [Next Round](#)

[Champions Toolkit](#) since it is a tool which GAC members could use for outreach information in their communities and networks.

GAC members discussed ICANN org's outreach, engagement and communications in under-represented and underserved regions relating to the ASP with activities undertaken in "target countries", and welcomed this effort. With a view to having effective targeting and ensuring that the ASP achieves the key objective of facilitating global diversification of the new gTLD application program, the GAC recommended that ICANN org consults and engages fully with GAC members to i) identify target countries, in keeping with the regional approach for selection in the next phase of the outreach, engagement and communications activities, which are expected to commence in January 2025, and ii) obtain support and guidance on how best to navigate and engage within the selected countries including the public sector.

Additionally, the GAC welcomes the recent announcement that the **ASP applicant readiness materials** will be published in the six UN languages, and strongly recommends that all materials developed for the ASP be translated and published into the working languages of the GAC (six UN languages plus Portuguese). The GAC welcomes the invitation extended by ICANN org to interested GAC Members to provide additional assistance on the awareness and promotion of the ASP in the relevant regions or jurisdictions.

Finally, GAC topic leads provided additional updates on topics of interest to the GAC including contention sets, singular vs plural strings and community priority evaluations. On Auctions: Mechanisms of Last Resort/Private Resolution of Contention Sets, GAC members expressed appreciation for the constructive dialogue with the Board following the Advice issued on this topic in the ICANN80 Kigali Communiqué and ICANN77 Washington D.C. Communiqué, and especially the community dialogue held by the Board at the request of the GAC since the Kigali Meeting. The GAC further appreciates the decision to prohibit the private resolution of contention sets, including private auctions. The GAC discussed the proposed path forward set forth by the ICANN Board as communicated to the GAC via a [letter](#) from the ICANN Board Chair, and determined that the GAC generally welcomes the Board's proposal including to provide applicants with an opportunity to submit an alternative string at the time of application in order to reduce the possibility of contention set issues. GAC members expressed their intention to submit a formal communication to the Board to this effect. The GAC will seek further dialogue with and guidance from ICANN org as it relates to implementation details of this proposal.

#### **Action Point(s):**

- **GAC Topic Leads** to draft a response to the ICANN Board on the proposed path forward pertaining to contention sets, in response to the Board letter submitted to the GAC Chair prior to ICANN81.

## 2.2. WHOIS and Registration Data Issues

Topic leads from the GAC Small Group on WHOIS/EPDP/GDPR reminded the GAC of the importance of domain name registration data, informally known as WHOIS, in light of the GAC Principles Regarding gTLD WHOIS Services (28 March 2007) which it was recalled reflect the importance of this data for numerous parties and various legitimate purposes.

Presenters provided an overview of the continuing multi-phase efforts undertaken to define a new registration data policy framework which would include requirements consistent with applicable data protection law, as well as a final access system to non-public registration data for lawful and legitimate purposes. Since May 2018 and the adoption of a Temporary Specification, the ICANN Community has been actively involved in policy work in several phases. All three phases of policy development work have concluded. Implementation of policy recommendations is ongoing for EPDP Phase 1 (policy foundations), and remains to be started for EPDP Phase 2A (differentiation between legal and natural persons). EPDP Phase 2 (registration data access system) has moved into a pilot phase with the launch of the Registration Data Request Services (RDRS), in light of concerns with the feasibility and costs of the originally proposed System for Standardized Access and Disclosure (SSAD). Consideration of future policy development regarding the accuracy of registration data (Accuracy Scoping effort) is still paused.

Regarding the issue of **Urgent Requests for Disclosure of Registration Data** in circumstances that pose an imminent threat to life, serious bodily injury, critical infrastructure, or child exploitation, it was recalled that the ICANN Board approved policy recommendations as part of EPDP Phase 1, and that interested stakeholders could not agree, subsequently, as part of implementation of these recommendations, on an appropriate timeline for responses to such requests. The GAC has argued that responses in such circumstances should be as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours, while ICANN Contracted Parties have sought to be given up to 3 business days for such responses. In light of this situation, the ICANN Board determined, following a correspondence from the GAC, that it was necessary to revisit the relevant policy recommendation (EPDP Phase 1 Recommendation 18). In the ICANN79 GAC San Juan Communiqué, the GAC advised the ICANN Board to act expeditiously to establish a clear process and a timeline for the delivery of a policy on Urgent Requests. The ICANN Board subsequently decided to defer action on this advice and initiated a consultation with the GNSO Council to determine the next step in this unprecedented procedural situation. It was highlighted that the ICANN Board believes responding to such imminent threats should be done in minutes or hours rather than days, but that this requires the ability to authenticate self-identified emergency responders and that no cross-border system for such authentication exists. The GNSO Council responded to the ICANN Board in August 2024 that a meeting should take place between the ICANN Board, the GNSO and GAC and PSWG representatives. Recently, in October 2024, the GAC proposed to the ICANN Board that two tracks of work could go in parallel. On the one hand, an “authentication track” could explore possible mechanisms to authenticate law enforcement requesters, while in parallel, a “policy track” would work to determine an appropriate timeline to respond to Urgent Requests, assuming an authentication mechanism is in place.

During a trilateral call on 4 November 2024, before ICANN81, the ICANN Board and the GNSO Council confirmed to the GAC that they would consider this proposal. For the GAC, next steps should be the resuming of the work of the EPDP Phase 1 IRT Implementation Review Team as soon as possible, which should be able to move quickly towards resolution of the policy aspect. Regarding the authentication track, it was noted the the GAC PSWG held a law enforcement workshop at the beginning of the ICANN81 meeting, with participation from Interpol, Europol and the FBI, which highlighted several authentication mechanisms currently available that could be leveraged and that would reduce validation costs. There were discussion of the possibility of a focused technical study group going forward to advance discussions and hopefully propose a solution to the authentication needs for timely responses to Urgent Requests.

A GAC Member welcomed and congratulated the GAC PSWG for the work already done on this matter and for demonstrating how quickly relevant parties are taking action. However, there are concerns with the continued deferral of Board action on the GAC Advice in the ICANN79 San Juan Communiqué and the Follow-Up on this advice in the subsequent Kigali Communiqué, despite GAC proactive proposals and significant participation, such as that witnessed during the pre-ICANN81 trilateral call, despite the fact that no appropriate notice was given.

Regarding the **Registration Data Request Service (RDRS)**, a co-chair of the GAC PSWG recalled that ICANN launched this pilot service as a free global one-stop-shop to request access to non-public gTLD registration data. This service is expected to change the current state of accessibility of registration data in a context where contact information of parties responsible for registrations of most gTLD domain names is unavailable publicly (redacted for privacy). Two GAC representatives are currently involved in the work of the RDRS Stranding Committee tasked to review the usage data and identify opportunities for improvements of the service.

A key finding from the data collected by the RDRS over its first 12 months remains an ongoing end-user awareness challenge. Of the 18,000 domains initially submitted into the RDRS system over a year, 2,000 led to disclosure requests actually being submitted. Of those, 300 were from law enforcement. This is to be compared to data collected from one national law enforcement agency which saw more than 35,000 requests submitted by 1,000 users to popular legacy WHOIS tools over the last 90 days. It was recalled that the GAC previously suggested ways to significantly increase awareness by linking the RDRS from registries and registrars WHOIS/RDAP output.

Among findings derived from data collected on RDRS usage during its first year of services, the following were presented:

- There are now 6,593 requestors registered in RDRS, responsible for 18,248 domain lookups, and 2,025 actual disclosure requests.
- About one third of lookups are for domains using TLDs not included in RDRS (such as those registered in ccTLDs), and another one third of lookups are for domains associated with non-participating registrars).
- When requestors were allowed to proceed to submit a disclosure request, roughly 60% of the time no disclosure request is made
- Overall 3% of initial lookups lead to a request being either Approved (422) or Partially Approved (23).

Several GAC Members reported on their national efforts to increase awareness of the RDRS, one of which confirmed that lack of awareness of the RDRS is a very significant issue and noted that despite their efforts, there were only 6 requests coming for their country, 3 of which were from law enforcement. This was taken to illustrate further that despite ICANN's effort to increase awareness, the "push" messaging approach is not delivering the expected outcome and that focus should shift to directly linking RDRS in WHOIS/RDAP outputs. Another challenge when raising awareness nationally in law enforcement circles is that expectations need to be set appropriately given that responses to disclosure requests might be disappointing in light of proxy services being turned on most of the time for new registrations and that registrars are currently choosing to respond pointing to their own proxy services instead of disclosing underlying registrant data.

Another GAC member wondered when it would be time for the GAC to draw conclusions from the RDRS pilot program in light of the information presented and the shortcomings they bring to light. In response, it was noted that the RDRS pilot program is planned to continue operating for another year and that there is great uncertainty as to what will happen at the end of it. A presenter cautioned that the lack of use of the RDRS should not be interpreted as a lack of demand for a disclosure system but rather as a product of the many challenges RDRS has evidenced in terms of awareness, ease of use of the system, and alignment of disclosure outcomes with requestors expectations.

Several GAC Members discussed the possibility to request voluntary participation of ccTLDs in the RDRS but noted potential challenges.

Regarding **Privacy and Proxy Services** used in domain registration data, it was recalled that these are business entities that are inserted between the person or organization that is registering a domain name and the registrar chosen to do so. This leads to changes in the way registration data is presented: for such registrations, registrars are listing the proxy entity as the registrant instead of the actual entity who is responsible for the registration in the first place. It was noted that when requesting disclosure of registration data, law enforcement is seeking information about the entity who initiated a domain registration and does not need information about the proxy service at play. These practices impact how the RDRS is currently functioning and potentially how a more permanent SSAD may function in the future.

It was recalled that the ICANN Board approved policy recommendations for the accreditation of Privacy/Proxy Service in 2015 and that a new Implementation Review Team (PPSAI IRT) has been assembled (following the suspension of the first IRT's work in in 2018) and has reconvened since ICANN80.

Regarding **Accuracy of Registration Data**, a reminder of the background was provided before the current status of ongoing efforts were discussed.

It was recalled that in 2020 the GAC had commented that work on this issue should not be deferred, that registration data should be accurate for the purposes for which it is processed and that inaccurate registration data would defeat the purpose of a disclosure system such as the SSAD.



A reference was made to the 2019 RDS-WHOIS2 Review Final Report in which it was estimated that the rate of inaccurate registration data is between 30 and 40%. From a procedural perspective, the GAC was reminded that the GNSO Accuracy Scoping Team was formed in 2021 as an initial step for possible policy development, but has now been paused for several years in connection with concerns about the possibility to access registration data for purposes of analyzing its accuracy. Most recently, the ICANN Board stated that despite the conclusion of negotiations of a Data Processing Specification (DPS) between ICANN org and the Contracted Parties, the DPS will not grant ICANN access to nonpublic registration to enable wide-scale accuracy studies. Currently, the GNSO is consulting its stakeholders and plans to engage with the GAC on a set of fundamental questions it hopes may help find a path forward. It was proposed that the GAC considers providing input in response to these questions<sup>1</sup>.

A GAC Topic Lead on issues of Registration Data suggested that the challenge facing the GAC in this area is that of finding a middle ground that would reconcile and balance the conflicting interests at play, among which: the legitimate needs for privacy, public safety, and the security and stability of the DNS. A PSWG Co-chair recalled an earlier GAC suggestion that registrar's accuracy verification practices could be tested without having to process any personal data in the way organization tests their employees' ability to detect phishing attempts using fake fishing emails.

A GAC Member expressed concern with the continued postponement of the work of the Accuracy Scoping Team as well as the shifting rationale to justify it, and stressed the importance of providing meaningful input going forward, including with perspectives from GAC Members' jurisdictions.

### 2.3. DNS Abuse Mitigation

GAC Topics Leads on DNS Abuse recalled the definition of DNS Abuse as adopted in ICANN's new contract amendments, as including malware, botnets, phishing, pharming, and certain spam cases. It was noted that while ICANN's role in DNS Abuse mitigation is limited to its contractual relationships with registries and registrars, there is a broader ecosystem of stakeholders such as resellers, hosting providers, and ccTLD operators who can and do contribute to the mitigation of DNS Abuse outside of ICANN's remit.

The **Turkish National CERT and ccTLD administrator** presented mechanisms they have in place for combating DNS abuse, leveraging Artificial Intelligence tools for detecting phishing and managing DNS Abuse reports. It was highlighted that tools and measures in place provide the ability to act quickly (e.g., domain takedowns within minutes) through collaboration with ISPs and other stakeholders and that of the more than 13,000 complaints analyzed, 5,000 were confirmed as abuses and led to domain cancellations or blocking.

A GAC Member commended Turkiye's approach for going beyond the use of AI and machine learning to prevent the registration of malicious domains, but to also integrate threat intelligence to

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://gnso.icann.org/sites/default/files/policy/2024/draft/draft-concept-proposal-accuracy-12sep24.pdf>

detect and respond to abuse. In response to a questions on .TR validation and verification requirements, it was clarified that while registration are open to anybody, registrants must use a Turkish registrar and have to provide accurate contact information including physical address, phone number and email.

ICANN Contractual Compliance provided an **update on the enforcement of the new DNS abuse requirements** in the Registry and Registrar Accreditation Agreements (RA/RAA) which became effective in April 2024. It was reported that over the last six months 192 DNS abuse investigations were initiated and over 2,700 malicious domains suspended. Among registrars' responses to those investigations, in most cases, the domain name is suspended (52%). In 21% of cases, the Registrar did not find actionable evidence of the DNS Abuse. In the rest of cases, Registrars took various actions to disrupt or stop the abuse. More information is available in a report of the first six months of enforcement<sup>2</sup>.

A GAC Member reported filing 3 DNS Abuse complaints with ICANN Compliance the processing of which is ongoing. Another GAC member sought to understand whether complaint volumes have increased since before the entry into force of the agreement, which was confirmed, and how long investigations take before registrars take action. In response, the ICANN Compliance representative indicated that duration varies with the complexity of each complaint. Some of them can be resolved on the same day. Others, such as those bringing to light more systemic issues may require registrars to implement process improvements which ICANN Compliance then tests before closing the complaint. A Member of the GAC Public Safety Working Group (PSWG) found the presentation encouraging and demonstrating that the amendments have been welcome and effective changes.

During a **panel discussion held to gather various stakeholder perspectives**, a representative of the Registrar Stakeholder Group (RySG) highlighted already existing practices in place at registrars for mitigating DNS Abuse prior to the amendments, with some registrars adopting new techniques like sinkholing to help gather intelligence on abuse patterns. A representative of the Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG) focused on large-scale threats (e.g., botnets) for which they are better able to respond, and emphasized the importance of high-quality abuse reports to facilitate prompt action and welcomed the expectation in the DNS Abuse amendments that report of DNS Abuse include evidence. An expert from the Security and Stability Advisory Committee of ICANN confirmed observing positive impact of the new amendments, in terms of increased abuse reporting and increased enforcement action on parties not responding appropriately to DNS Abuse. He also stressed the importance of measuring parameters such as the rate of adequately evidenced reports (currently roughly 50%), how long the harm cause by instances of DNS Abuse last, and how effective mitigation actions are at reducing the overall volume of DNS Abuse. A representative from ICANN org's Global Domain Services recalled that the amendments were intended as a first step and that the community should continue to keep abreast of developments in the field of DNS Abuse, including data expected from ICANN's Domain Metrica and Inferential Analysis of Maliciously Registered Domains (INFERMAL) Projects.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/icann-enforcement-of-dns-abuse-mitigation-requirements-08nov24-en.pdf>

A GAC Member requested clarification on what areas that the Contracted Parties House (CPH) DNS Abuse Working Group are exploring for potential policy development. The RySG representative confirmed that narrowly focused PDPs are being discussed as a possible way forward, for discussion with the ICANN Community, potentially on areas identified in the INFERMAL study. Another GAC Member recalled that the ICANN Board had previously offered to convene listening sessions on the scope of possible future PDPs, and welcomed an update on this offer. The RrSG representative explained that the CPH DNS Abuse Working Group has engaged with ALAC and is planning to meet with SSAC in the near future, for purposes of having conversations on trends and possible actions by Contracted Parties outside of PDPs.

In terms of **next steps**, it was suggested that collaboration between the GAC, SSAC and other group be enhanced to address DNS Abuse holistically, explore the sharing of tools and best practices including leveraging Artificial Intelligence. It was also suggested that targeted, narrowly scoped policy development processes be considered to address specific type of DNS Abuse. Regarding DNS Abuse metrics and reporting, the need to continue developing abuse metrics was stressed in order to measure the impact of mitigation efforts.

### **3. GAC OPERATIONAL MATTERS**

#### **3.1. GAC Strategic Planning**

Due to lack of time during the GAC Strategic Planning and Operational Matters plenary session, a progress report on the delivery of the Expected Outcomes in the [GAC Annual Plan 2024-2025](#) was shared with the GAC Membership via email.

As stated in the [GAC Istanbul Communiqué](#), GAC Members are invited to consider the progress report and to engage further in areas of interest on the implementation of the Annual Plan.

#### **3.2. GAC Operating Principles Evolution Working Group Update**

The GAC Operating Principles Evolution (GOPE) WG Co-Chairs provided an update on the WG's activities since ICANN80. Specifically, the co-chairs noted that the WG discussed a proposal submitted by the GAC Chair which was introduced to GAC members at ICANN80, regarding the possibility of modifying or extending the leadership team's tenures (i.e for the GAC Chair and the GAC Vice-Chairs). In preparation for ICANN81, the GOPE WG submitted various options for GAC membership consideration and input.

The GAC Chair provided background on the thoughts behind the proposal to extend leadership tenures, mainly noting that the learning curve is difficult for those stepping into the leadership team (both in the Vice Chair or Chair positions). As such, extending the tenure of the leadership team would ensure a retention of knowledge and expertise, and ensure greater continuity within the leadership team.

GAC members discussed the various options presented by the GAC Chair, including extending the Vice Chair term length from one year to two years, retaining the option for one reelection term. GAC members expressed some concerns with the extension of the term, noting that a two-year commitment may be challenging to fulfil for GAC members, and may result in fewer candidates. Some GAC members expressed their support for an extension of the number of terms, rather than having two terms maximum, to three for example.

Regarding the Chair's tenure, GAC members discussed various options brought forward to increase the term to three possible terms of two years, with a maximum of six years. Another proposal included an increase to the length of the term itself, i.e. maintaining two maximum terms but increasing each term to three years rather than two years.

GAC members discussed the importance of staggering elections to avoid having the entire leadership team renewed at the same time, i.e. maintaining the Chair election and Vice Chair elections as separate instances. Additionally, an alignment of the timing of the GAC Chair election with the ICANN

Board elections was also discussed, to enable the GAC Chair to be onboarded on the ICANN Board immediately.

GAC members ultimately agreed on further discussing this topic intersessionally via a teleconference, prior to making any decisions or votes on potential changes to the GAC Operating Principles pertaining to leadership tenures.

**Action Point(s):**

- **GAC Support Staff** to facilitate scheduling of a GAC wide meeting in December 2024 to further discuss this topic.

### **3.3. GAC Communiqué Drafting**

In addition to the brief summary of the Communiqué drafting process that the GAC Chair and support staff shared during the GAC Opening Plenary session on 9 November 2024, committee Members and Observer representatives participated in a total of seven sessions during the meeting week to compose text, review and discuss draft language, and to complete the drafting process. During the ICANN81 Istanbul Communiqué drafting sessions, Argentina, a GAC Member, indicated that it has dissociated from the Pact of the Future, including the Global Digital Compact.

The Communiqué was completed during ICANN81 with a total of 11 issues of Importance identified by the committee to share with the ICANN Board and the rest of the ICANN multistakeholder community. The document was then due to be proofed and finalized by the GAC Chair, circulated to GAC Member and Observer delegations by the support staff, and then be subjected to a 72-hour review period by the entire committee membership before released for publication.

## **4. GAC WORKING GROUPS**

### **4.1. 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.

In the week prior to ICANN81, the PSWG met with multiple ICANN stakeholder groups to discuss topics of mutual interest. During ICANN81, the PSWG invited INTERPOL, Europol, FBI and Contracted Parties' representatives to discuss potential means of law enforcement identity authentication with ICANN technical staff.

The PSWG participated in briefing the GAC during the session on WHOIS and Data Protection Policy developments, which highlighted several aspects of the PSWG's ongoing work: engagement on "Urgent Requests" for registration data; participation in the Standing Committee tasked with reviewing data generated by the Registration Data Request Service (RDRS), including input to improve the utility and awareness of the RDRS, and participation in the Privacy/Proxy Accreditation Issues Implementation Review Team, including highlighting the relevance of this work to the RDRS and successor systems.

The PSWG appreciated the perspectives provided by Türkiye's .TR ccTLD during the GAC briefing session on DNS Abuse, which highlighted regional experiences in the shared global fight against DNS abuse.

### **4.2. GAC Underserved Regions Working Group (USRWG)**

The GAC Underserved Regions Working Group (USRWG) held three (3) capacity development sessions at ICANN81 which focused on topics of interest to GAC members.

The first two sessions included discussions on the new gTLD Program and opportunities for the Middle East region, and updates to the Africa region on Internet Coordination Policy 2 (ICP-2) issues and the recent Africa Internet Summit. The third session was dedicated to language breakouts, on how these topics could be linked to GAC Strategic Objectives 2 (Effectiveness of the GAC) and 3 (Future Rounds of New gTLDs). A set of opening questions were made available to the different groups to start off their discussion:

- How do capacity development sessions relate to the strategic objective (S.O) #2/#3 of the GAC?
- What are your Government concerns and/or your challenges with regard to these S.Os?
- What are the actions needed to progress towards achieving the expected outcomes?
- How can you contribute within your region to advance collaboration and progress?

The French language group reported on discussions pertaining to strategic objective #3, noting the importance of investing in communication and outreach to raise awareness about the new round of new gTLDs, especially in the African region. It is crucial to explain the benefits of the new round, and how people can participate. Regarding strategic objective #2, the group mentioned the need for platforms of collaboration to continue discussions of interest to the GAC, whether they are topic leads or newcomers, that would then be brought to the wider GAC's attention for discussion in plenary.

The Spanish language group reported that discussions focused on the clarity and relevance of the capacity development sessions, which are extremely clear and highly illustrative but somewhat too technical, whilst it would be more constructive to address more policy related issues, and select the content used for webinars versus in-person sessions. For instance, with the new round of new gTLDs, the group believes that it would be useful to understand what happened in the first round since not all audiences have a clear understanding of what the new round implies. Although significant efforts are being made in the GAC to raise awareness, there is still a lack of perception, particularly in certain regions.

The Chinese speaking group shared views on the next round of new gTLDs, with the need for particular focus on the public interest area in terms of policy settings and legal issues, which should be in line with the rules and legal framework of the different countries. The group noted its concern about breaking the digital gap and would like to see more focus on the interest and needs of Chinese users. Lastly, the group would like to see more support to developing countries on a digital and technical level, such as the high application fees for the next round.

The English language group noted that the capacity development sessions relate very well to the work of the GAC and raise awareness on current issues and challenges.

Several concerns were identified with regards to the objective of the GAC on the next round of new gTLDs, such as the Applicant Guidebook (AGB). Due to the fact that it is a complex document, the group wondered to what extent it could be simplified. Another concern that the group raised was related to objections to string applications, and whether the provisions are adequate and simple enough that governments can understand the process and could make timely and effective interventions. Additionally, the fact that even with a reduction in the cost for applying for new gTLDs is still quite prohibitive, especially for small market players and underserved regions, could impact ICANN's objectives for diversity.

With respect to the actions needed to progress to achieve the GAC strategic objectives, governments should ensure that their local governments, when developing relevant policies, take those objectives into account.

Finally, to the question on how governments can contribute within their region to advance collaboration and progress, the group replied that this could be done through stakeholder consultations, case studies and using available resources.

Based on the feedback received at ICANN81, the USRWG will assess the framework and substance of the capacity building approach for future ICANN Meetings, including the potential participation of

SSAC Members to cover topics of interest to the GAC such as the impact of emerging technologies on DNS Abuse and the DNS in general.

#### **4.3. GAC Operating Principles Evolution Working Group (GOPEWG)**

The GOPE WG Co-Chairs updated the GAC on recent activities carried out by the Working Group. The GOPE WG continues its revision of the GAC Operating Principles while receiving a proposal presented from the GAC Chair to revise the tenure of leadership positions. The GAC conducted a preliminary discussion of this proposal at ICANN81, and GAC members were invited to participate in further full GAC discussions. The Working Group will resume its meetings post ICANN81 and continue its discussion on matters in relation to updating the GAC Operating Principles.



## 5. CROSS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### 5.1. Meeting with the ICANN Board

The GAC Chair welcomed members of the ICANN Board to the session and noted that an array of important topics had been identified for the meeting discussion. The Board Chair thanked the GAC Chair and indicated that the Board was looking forward to this discussion. She noted that intersessional meetings between the Board and the GAC over the last several months had yielded some very good solutions and that Board members appreciated the back and forth.

The GAC Chair identified the first agenda topic area – the **Next Round of new gTLDs**. He noted that the GAC appreciated the Board and ICANN staff's responsiveness to recent GAC Advice regarding implementation of the Applicant Support Program (ASP) and that GAC members were looking forward to sharing their reactions with the Board to community presentations made earlier in the week regarding progress and plans to initiate the ASP for the next round. He also noted that GAC members were also very interested in follow-up on the matter of the resolution of contentions sets.

GAC members first shared a number of views and questions regarding the **Applicant Support Program** (ASP) - including the availability of funding and questions about publicizing the next round in various localities and regions. GAC Members expressed appreciation for the consultation discussions held intersessionally with the Board on resolving issues that governments had regarding ICANN80 GAC advice and the Board's proposals which resulted in some good compromises. It was acknowledged that the organization appears to be on a good path forward regarding the ASP - particularly regarding regular reporting (monthly when possible) on the status of ASP application submissions. Reference was made to discussions about the milestone of 20 application submissions being a good check-in point regarding prospective ASP funding limits and whether sufficient geographic diversity was being observed among the demographics of ASP applicants.

Mention was made of the need to publicize the next round and the ASP as widely as possible. Despite the financial relief being afforded by the ASP, it was recognized that at even the highest of award levels that applicants would still need to make a case to potential funding/lending institutions. In that context, it was observed that it would be of substantial value to ensure that financial institutions were aware of the next round so that applicants would find a more fertile environment for making funding requests or seeking loans from those institutions.

The Interim ICANN CEO expressed her thanks on behalf of ICANN org staff for the GAC's tremendous partnership regarding the ASP noting it was remarkable and incredibly valued. She confirmed there will be monthly reporting that will be shared with the IRT and noted that GAC and other community members had been briefed on the format of that reporting at other community sessions earlier in the week. She explained that funding agencies and development banks are on the list of prospective audiences for ASP promotion and she offered to any and all interested parties from the GAC to partner with ICANN org staff to make sure that the right development bank contacts are on ICANN's outreach database so that future communications go directly to the right

people. She cautioned that some of the more high-profile global funding agencies are often not in the relevant countries where those applicants might live.

Board members also reminded the GAC that the Board very much wants to find and support deserving applicants from all over the world and that it is important that when planned outreach is made in specific countries that ICANN staff collaborate with GAC members in those countries to identify the appropriate organizations to target. It was noted that although materials related to the Applicant Support Program have already been translated into a few languages, there is interest in collaborating with anybody in countries that use languages that are not yet supported to allow the materials to be translated into even more languages, as time and capacity allows. Board members reminded the GAC that they are aware that ASP funding is limited and that there is no guarantee of how many applicants there will be or even a number that can ultimately be supported, however, the Board is committed to looking for additional funding if that becomes necessary.

Board members were also asked if, in addition to anticipated financial support for NGOs, MSMEs, and indigenous categories, whether funding was also available for ccTLDs. It was observed that some governments and other organizations who currently run their own ccTLDs may have the capability and desire to run their own new generic top-level domains. Board members responded that the ASP is intended to address those applicants as well - the countries which already have their own ccTLDs and who may be interested in expanding to new gTLDs or possibly using IDNs.

GAC Members were then asked to share their current views regarding plans for the **resolution of contention sets in the next round**. GAC Members shared their appreciation with the Board's responsiveness to the concerns of governments and appreciated the goodwill shown by the Board in consultation with the GAC - noting that time is of the essence on these types of issues. In particular, the GAC absolutely agrees with the prohibition of private resolutions, including private auctions which is very welcome.

GAC members shared some of the conversation they are having with other community groups on this issue - including looking into the use of alternate strings, or "replacement strings", as ICANN Org is calling them in their presentations. It was noted that the GAC we will be responding to the Board and the consultation that it launched regarding the way forward on Contention Sets, particularly noting that having an alternative string may well help smaller enterprises and non-commercial enterprises, one of the issues of previous GAC concern.

Board members shared the hope that the option of applicants providing an alternative string or a second choice in case their first string is in contention will have the result of reducing the number of contention sets. It was noted that the concept of alternative strings has currently been intentionally left as open and flexible as possible so that the alternative string option can provide as much flexibility as possible. Applicants could provide two entirely distinct and unrelated strings, which may or may not require different business plans, or they could apply for alternative strings for the same business plan. It was noted that situations are likely to vary from applicant to applicant.

Finally, when asked, Board members clarified what the term “private resolutions” was meant to address. In particular the prohibition would not permit competing applicants to reach any settlement or any understanding resulting in the withdrawal of an applicant because they would not be permitted to discuss the “private” resolution of their competing applications.

It was further explained by Board members that they had received strong advice from experts that if ICANN actually wanted to avoid private financial auctions and the use of these arrangements, that a post-application joint venture could be easily used to disguise what would otherwise be a private auction. Moreover, after consideration of many alternatives, the Board found that actual enforcement would be very difficult with many potential disputes about whether a joint venture was bona fide, or whether it was just a sham for an auction or a payout. It was noted that the alternate string concept is intended to address that concern, in part, so that, in fact, if applications are submitted that would otherwise be in contention, both of the parties could get a gTLD and move forward and proceed and neither application would be “knocked out”. So, the goal is to actually allow both parties to move forward, one with an alternate string.

Next, the GAC Chair raised the topic of **Policy Development Transparency (i.e., Draft ICANN Code of Ethics and GNSO Statements of Interest)**. He explained that Statements of Interest and, in general, the ICANN Code of Ethics, continue to be important priority areas for governments in ICANN. He noted that GAC members had read the recently released draft document carefully and hope that the matter can be resolved quickly. He asked Board members for their reactions to the ICANN Org draft document currently out for Public Comment.

Board members shared that transparency is very important to them and the GAC's continued interest in the topic is very much appreciated. The Board is supportive of the draft code of conduct that's out for Public Comment and all community reaction so far has been in support of the draft. In terms of next steps. It was shared that after ICANN81, ICANN Org will coordinate all the public comments that have come in and will also convene a community-based panel so that there could be a discussion in the community with regard to the draft proposal as well as the comments that have come in. The Board will look into the results of those discussions and adjust the draft code accordingly. It was shared that the plan right now is to implement the new code in the first quarter of 2025. It was further noted that enforcement of any new code or process will be a collective responsibility of all the ICANN community. The Board will encourage impacted parts of the community to be proactive and positive in that regard with the Board ready to reaffirm any of the new principles if issues are raised to that level.

GAC Members thanked Board members for their responsiveness on this issue. It was noted that governments are listening closely to the community and have observed that reactions to the draft documents have been very positive, very supportive. The Board was alerted that the committee is contemplating Communique language on this matter.

Moving on to the third agenda topic, the GAC Chair noted that since March 2024, the ICANN Board has deferred action on the GAC's Advice in the San Juan communiqué to act expeditiously to establish a clear process in a timeline for the delivery of a policy regarding **urgent requests for**

**disclosure of registration data** from contracted parties. He said the GAC appreciated the recent 4 November trilateral call on this topic between GAC members, the Board and the GNSO council and asked when can the GAC expect to receive feedback from the Board on the GAC's latest proposal regarding this topic.

Board members shared that they also found the recent trilateral call to be very useful and they have been talking with members of the community and the GNSO council in particular about the ways forward with respect to policy development. In particular they have been socializing the idea of having a couple more trilateral calls to make sure that all of the questions that need to be nailed down are identified.

It was explained that one area of discussion involves a potential continuation of the EPDP Phase 1 Policy Development so that a whole new policy process does not need to be opened up to address the matter. Board members are interested in the work that the GAC's Public Safety Working Group is doing on the authentication issues and it is understood that there was a useful meeting in Istanbul on the topic and that progress is being made on that topic. To the extent that Board members can support that work, they want to make themselves available to do that.

Board members could not predict how long further discussion will take, but there was interest expressed in moving expeditiously to identify the policy issues that need to be resolved. It was noted that the Board would certainly want to have a policy developed well before the implementation of the anticipated authentication system. In response to questions asked later in the session it was clarified that the Board is interested in moving forward with necessarily starting a brand new process, but by more likely incorporating or reviving an existing process - be it the EPDP (policy) or the IRT (more of an implementation orientation). There is no firm commitment to any particular approach at this moment, but a willingness and a desire to explore and be creative to identify the best and most efficient approach.

GAC member comments reinforced the importance of this issue to governments - particularly noting the considerable attendance on the recent trilateral call on very short notice. Reference to the recent 15 October correspondence from the GAC to the Board was made in the context of reinforcing the need for two separate discussion tracks - one regarding the timeline and the other involving authentication. It was cautioned that the timeline discussion should be narrow and not expanded widely to other issues.

The GAC Chair introduced the fourth agenda topic - **UN Level Discussions** - and asked Board members to share their reactions to the latest multilateral UN outcome regarding the Global Digital Compact (GDC) - in particular, how it addresses internet governance issues relevant to ICANN and the multistakeholder processes?

Board members reported that ICANN has been very engaged in the proceedings with regard to the Global Digital Compact (GDC) in the United Nations and noted that they were very pleased with the ratified version of the GDC because the original versions of the document had left out the technical community and the latest version now recognizes the technical community as a separate

stakeholder. They also expressed appreciation that the latest document version recognizes that Internet Governance is global in nature and is diverse and multi-stakeholder.

The GAC Chair then asked, how does ICANN take some of the positive elements coming out of the GDC and reinforce them in the WSIS+20 process? The Board Chair shared that it is not yet clear what the conclusion of WSIS+20 will be because this is a process that will take place at the United Nations General Assembly. She noted that the Board is hoping the review would result, amongst many other things, in continuing to uphold the Internet Governance Forum so that the community can continue to meet there and there will be a reaffirmation of the multi-stakeholder model of Internet Governance, along with support for the technical community as a separate stakeholder. It was noted that ICANN has established the WSIS+20 outreach network (now with 540 participants from 85 countries) and also very recently a smaller WSIS+20 discussion group that is actually a small discussion group comprised of SO-AC representatives. It was noted that a number of community members are taking the discussions from among the smaller ICANN groups and amplifying them among broader audiences interested in internet governance issues. It was noted by Board members that the GAC community is the community that needs to take some of those positive elements into the WSIS+20 process itself. Other session attendees agreed on the nexus between the GDC and WSIS+20 review effort, noting that the WSIS+20 review is far more than just the governance of the internet. It's also capacity building, it's digital divide, it's development.

The Board Chair shared that fidelity towards IANA functions and other technical components of what ICANN does continues to operate at a high level of efficiency. But in addition to that, ICANN is working very closely with other technical partners in the ecosystem - including the RIR community, ISOC, and other ISTAR organizations.

GAC Members shared a number of observations about activities and opportunities scheduled to take place over the next year. It was expressed that it is very important that ICANN continues to act as a platform/facilitator of this community-wide dialogue where it helps us to keep on the conversation and to form and maintain coalitions, alliances, and networks that bring in a variety of positions and viewpoints. They encouraged the Board and ICANN to be as proactive as possible, to engage in these conversations, because it affects all the different stakeholder groups. ICANN and ICANN Org especially can act as a catalyzer of these conversations, and as a builder of awareness to help community members to establish positions and develop opinions.

The ICANN Interim CEO shared that the ICANN discussion groups have only just started - two calls so far, and it will meet as often as it decides that it wants to meet. She noted that ICANN is participating in that group as well as facilitating it, which may help inspire outcomes as much as the discussions themselves. Attendees were reminded that the ICANN organization has engagement teams all over the world, and it continues to be a priority for the staff to make sure that the community engages as much as possible in regional outreach activities and regional meetings as much as possible as it is important not only to protect what is done by the multistakeholder community but to publicize what we do and why we do it, and to show the world what the model achieves.

Some GAC members agreed that it is important to reinforce and demonstrate that the bottom-up approach works and that the Internet should continue to work, while others may have different views. It was noted that the GAC has a very important role in this effort and that GAC strategic objective number 8 is an important goal that should help GAC representatives to better explain at home and in their ministries what the bottom-up approach is about, and what it means to collaborate and be together to make decisions. Board members agreed that the world would need help of the members of the GAC to reinforce this message of collaboration and partnership in working together and to ensure that all stakeholders have a voice at the ICANN table.

It was noted that although many of these discussions will culminate in the UN General Assembly (GA) later next year, there are a number of important events scheduled to take place before that event. First, GAC members expressed appreciation for the preparations work and resources that ICANN, the organization and the Board are putting into for the upcoming Internet Governance Forum in Saudi Arabia. Other upcoming events noted included the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development plenary session meeting in the Spring of next year to adopt a detailed report on the progress of the WSIS process and also a resolution that will form perhaps the bedrock of the UN GA discussions that will take place later in the year. It was also noted that UNESCO played a very important role in the creation of the WSIS process and are responsible for many of the WSIS action lines. Additionally, it was mentioned that the WSIS High Level Forum is taking place in July next year and that the event will be the last set piece event for many GAC members and other stakeholders before the actual GA discussion.

It was emphasized that ICANN should continue, alongside other members of the technical community, to promote and participate in those various events and that the organization should view itself as a leader and facilitator for these types of discussion to not only promote the multistakeholder model but to demonstrate authoritative leadership on identifying the challenges and the opportunities ahead regarding the overall evolution of the Internet.

As a final topic of discussion, the GAC Chair briefly identified three **areas of potential priority focus for the new ICANN CEO** when he starts in December of this year. The Board had asked the GAC to share views on this area. Although the committee did not have the time to agree on a specific set of consensus recommendations, the GAC Chair shared three particular areas that had been identified by member input. Noting that they were not listed in priority order three specific areas were identified including, ICANN's role in the preservation of ICANN's multistakeholder model in current UN processes (GDC implementation and upcoming WSIS +20 review); effective and successful implementation of the Next Round of New gTLDs with focus on Applicant Support and Resolution of Contention Sets; and determination of a timeframe and clear procedures for urgent requests of domain names' registration data. In follow-up comments a fourth category was mentioned regarding the importance of outreach by the new CEO to underserved regions around the world. It was noted, for example that an ICANN CEO has not visited the Caribbean region in the last decade and that such outreach can be very beneficial to not only enhancing the value of what ICANN does, but also enhancing the value of Internet governance and highlighting the importance of digital transformation and the development of digital economies even in small regions or territories.

By way of wrap-up the GAC Chair and the Board Chair both expressed appreciation for the dialogue and looked forward to future joint meetings. The session was ended.

## **5.2. Meeting with the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)**

The Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) and Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) held a bilateral session to discuss issues of mutual interest. The main agenda focused on the state of cooperation between the GAC and GNSO Council, New gTLD Program Next Round, GNSO Statements of Interest and Transparency, WHOIS and Data Protection and Urgent Requests and Latin Script Diacritics.

Pertaining to the state of cooperation between the GAC and GNSO, the respective Points of Contact and Liaisons provided an update on improvements and changes they saw during the last four years. Notably more transparency and collaboration was identified as a significant improvement, resulting in greater communication and active partnership. The GNSO liaison noted that an area for improvement is the GNSO Council's response to the GAC communiqués to include additional information which goes beyond what the GNSO Council has previously done. Additionally, intersessional bilateral meetings were mentioned as a potential way to further enhance collaboration between the GNSO and the GAC.

On **WHOIS and Data Accuracy**, the GNSO Council provided an update on a recent approach to address this issue. As such the GNSO Council noted that an assignment form is being sent out including a number of questions. First to ICANN org on some regulatory background and how regulatory developments may impact the community work on accuracy, and then a number of questions for the community. The purpose of this assignment is to gather data, to level set and determine what the expectations are, and how new regulations could impact this work. Questions were submitted to ICANN for the regulation piece and ICANN's regulatory team is looking at these questions regarding regulation and once this is completed, the GNSO will send questions to the broader community, including the GAC. The GNSO intends to collect this information, align on understanding, try to better scope the problem and proceed from there.

On the **ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct on SOIs and General Ethics Policy**, GNSO Council members noted that the code of conduct was recently released by ICANN, and as such the GNSO hasn't had a chance to react to this and does not have a unified opinion on this code yet, but asked GAC members if they have initial reactions to share. The GAC Chair noted that the GAC gives a lot of importance to ICANN's transparency and credibility, which is directly related to the SOIs. GAC members further expressed appreciation for ICANN org's quick reaction and attention to this matter and that the content appears to be positive. GAC members expressed their hope that this code will provide an opportunity to improve transparency across ICANN's policy development processes.

On the **New gTLD Program Next Round**, the GAC and GNSO discussed the resolution of contention sets and the Applicant Support Program. The GNSO Council expressed support for the Board's

proposed path forward on **Resolution of Contention Sets** including the possibility of submitting alternative or replacement strings, while noting that the GNSO Council still harbors some procedural and substantive concerns, but will not stand in the way of this approach. GAC members aligned with the GNSO Council's positions on this topic, and stressed the support of the prohibition of private resolution of contention sets.

On the **Applicant Support Program**, the GAC and GNSO discussed the recent Board/GAC consultation process to identify a compromise solution in order to keep the expected efficiency of the ASP program while allowing more room and opportunity to promote awareness in less developed regions. The GNSO Council didn't have an opportunity to discuss this so a formal position is not currently available, but at a high level the compromise discussed by the GAC and the Board does not seem to contradict or dilute the outcomes of the GGP on Applicant Support. As such, the GNSO Council's initial reaction is that it appears like a reasonable path forward and hopefully addresses enough of the GAC's concerns on this particular issue.

Pertaining to **Latin Script Diacritics**, the GNSO Council noted that the Charter for the upcoming Policy Development Process (PDP) on Diacritics is going to be discussed during ICANN81, and further information can be provided to the GAC after this. GNSO Council members noted that the scope of this PDP is relatively narrow on the issue of Latin diacritics' accent over Latin characters, and that this would result in a quick turnaround. GAC members expressed support for the PDP and hopefully the expedited process for the PDP to avoid it being a gating issue for the next round.

On **Privacy/Proxy Work**, the GNSO Council provided an update on the Privacy and Proxy Services Accreditation Implementation Review Team (PPSAI IRT) noting its kick-off meeting was held at ICANN80 and it's been holding bi-weekly meetings since July 2024. As part of the preliminary work from the regular meetings ICANN Org asked the IRT to carefully review the 21 policy recommendations from the final report on this item and identify questions.

Finally, on **Urgent Requests**, GNSO Council members noted the Board raised some concerns about a recommendation specific to urgent requests noting urgent requests measured in business days may not be fit for purpose while also recognizing that any requests would need to be authenticated by a registrar or contracted party and that would likely take time. As such, more work is needed on this topic, and the GNSO Council acknowledged reception of the letter from the GAC. This will be further discussed during the GNSO Council Wrap Up session at ICANN81, specifically to gather questions or concerns about the GAC's proposed approach.

### **5.3. Meeting with the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)**

The Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) and At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) held a bilateral session to discuss issues of mutual interest. The agenda focused on the topics of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)+20 and Domain Name System (DNS) Abuse.



On the topic **WSIS+20: Reflections and Future Directions**, the ALAC focused the discussion with a set of questions on how the GAC and the ALAC could work together to ensure the WSIS+20 negotiations become more open, transparent and inclusive; and whether both groups could explore options for collaboration at the national level, in preparation of the WSIS+20 discussions.

The ALAC noted that the Global Digital Compact (GDC) discussions have been valuable despite a lack of transparency, but most of all, end users seem to have issues with how and whom to convey their views to, in order to reach the WSIS+20 negotiators.

GAC members noted that Internet Governance discussions are part of the GAC's strategic plan with one of the underlying points being engagement and discussions across constituencies. For instance, many governments have been engaging in as many fora as possible, such as at ICANN, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and at a national level.

GAC members shared about their national outreach activities regarding WSIS+20, reinforcing the importance to work cross-functionally at the national level, and invited ALAC members to reach out to local GAC representatives.

On **DNS Abuse: Addressing the Challenges**, the ALAC introduced the topic noting that DNS Abuse is likely perpetrated by parties that have access to registered domains, such as bulk registrations, which are more attractive to potential perpetrators of DNS Abuse, to register more domains and carry on their malicious activities. Looking at the results from the Inferential Analysis of Maliciously Registered Domains (INFERMAL) project report<sup>3</sup> and the conclusions from its session with the ICANN Board, noting that the community can push ahead for further obligations to combat DNS Abuse; the ALAC invited the GAC to collaborate on introducing more standard benchmark commitments by contracted parties, while also continuing to raise this issue through the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) small team on DNS Abuse.

The GAC supplemented on the ALAC's intervention about the INFERMAL report noting that, although the GAC hadn't had sufficient time to assess the findings, some of the conclusions in the report note that the dollar reduction in registration fee corresponds to a 49% increase in malicious domains; that the availability of free services such as web hosting drives an 88% surge in malicious activities; and that registrars providing API access for domain registration or account creation, experience a staggering 401% rise in malicious domains. Taking into account those findings, the GAC agreed with the ALAC on considering a more proactive rather than reactive approach to those challenges.

#### **5.4. Meeting with the Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC)**

The Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC) met with the GAC to provide an introduction on the work of the committee and the domain name system (DNS) root server system.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/inferential-analysis-maliciously-registered-domains-08nov24-en.pdf>

In a first part, the RSSAC Chair presented the role of the RSSAC and how it works within the ICANN multi stakeholder system, by introducing the RSSAC's scope of activity, members, as well as its policy development work.

In a second part, the RSSAC Chair explained the role and purpose of the DNS, the roles of the address resolver and authoritative server, as well as common misunderstandings of the Root Server System.

In summary, the Root Server System provides Top Level Domain (TLD) Address Information not Internet content, it does not decide what TLD Address Information appears in the Root Zone; and it is not a "gatekeeper" as it has very little, if any, direct interaction with end users.<sup>4</sup>

## 5.5. Meeting with the Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC)

This bilateral meeting the GAC and the Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC) of ICANN centered around technical and security challenges related to the DNS and covered discussion of the impact of Artificial Intelligence on DNS Abuse and DNS Abuse Mitigation, alternative blockchain-based namespaces, and opportunities for greater engagement between GAC and SSAC.

Ram Mohan, Chair of the SSAC recalled the role, structure and objectives of this Advisory Committee of ICANN. He reminded GAC Members that SSAC provides technical advice on the security and stability of Internet identifiers, with a Membership appointed by the ICANN Board, based on relevant expertise from diverse technical and professional backgrounds. A presentation of both the Membership and Leadership of SSAC was given. It was also explained that there are three ways for SSAC to undertake work on any issue: one or more SSAC members propose a topic, the ICANN Board makes a request to SSAC, or a request emerges from the ICANN community. As a matter of objective, it was stressed that the SSAC intends to be an authority on 5 key topics in ICANN: DNS Abuse, New gTLDs, DNSSEC, Alternative Namespaces, and security aspects of Internet Governance.

Another GAC Member sought SSAC's views on ongoing global dialogues and processes relating to Internet Governance (Global Digital Compact and WSIS Review) given references to security and stability of Internet systems and infrastructure. The SSAC Chair confirmed that this is on the area of constant attention and that some SSAC members are directly engaged in these processes.

Regarding the **impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on DNS Abuse**, a member of the SSAC Leadership team presented both increased challenges in terms of DNS Abuse as well as opportunities in terms of mitigation. Generative AI tools were explained to have significantly increased the sophistication and volume of attacks while AI-generated content, such as phishing emails, is now more believable, scalable, and harder to detect given that traditional methods like pattern matching are less effective. AI also enables the creation of fake identities, documents, and fraudulent registrations, which complicates detection efforts. On the positive side, leveraging AI and machine learning was presented as a potential for increasing prediction, detection and counter-abuse capabilities.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://gac.icann.org/sessions/icann81-session-6-gac-meeting-with-the-rssac>.

Regarding predictive tool in the fight against DNS Abuse, a GAC Member wondered whether there was ongoing or planned work in the SSAC. SSAC Members responded that while some forms of DNS Abuse (such as Domain Generation Algorithms in the context of Botnets) lend themselves to prediction, this is not the case broadly. They also cautioned that AI is not a magic bullet in this area. Another obstacle for predictive anti-abuse measure was noted to be difficulty and often impossibility to access to domain registration data, including for legitimate purposes such as conducting predictive analysis and correlating registration data across multiple domain names.

Once GAC Members wondered whether AI could help with preventive assessment of registration data accuracy before a domain is delegated. SSAC members confirmed the potential of AI for these purposes, and noted however that this is not solely in the hands of registrars and possibly registries who are the only parties to have access to unredacted registration data.

As it relates to **Blockchain and the DNS**, the SSAC Chair proposed that such technological evolutions should be embraced as opposed to resisted but stressed that should these blockchain-based alternative namespaces seek to be integrated into the DNS Namespace, this must be done in a responsible way, with stability and security in mind. It was reminded that the SSAC has published a report on the evolution of the DNS and new technologies (SAC123) and hosted a panel of experts on the topic during its recent workshop in Washington D.C. There is also significant collaboration between the SSAC and ICANN's Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) to align on relevant areas of research and to avoid duplication.

Finally, the **SSAC called for greater collaboration with governments and the GAC**, recognizing that policymakers need capacity building on new technologies in order to base policy making on actual facts and data, as well as on technical feasibility of potential policy options. SSAC offered to provide customized briefings and expertise tailored to ongoing government concerns.

A GAC Vice Chair acknowledged the importance of advice to policymakers from the technical community and recalled an instance of an SSAC Report being influential in the GAC delivering advice to the ICANN Board regarding DNS Abuse and New gTLDs.

Several GAC Members and the SSAC Chair discussed to potential to consider a formal liaison between the GAC and SSAC, noting that Gabriel Andrews, a GAC PSWG Co-Chair, has been serving as an informal liaison between the two committee and that in any event, a formal liaison to the SSAC would need to go through a vetting process identical to SSAC Members.

While several GAC Members commended SSAC for the quality of the presentation delivered during this bilateral meeting, several GAC Members also suggested the GAC and SSAC meet more regularly, including as part of the GAC capacity building workshops, given that in addition to sharing SSAC's priorities, the GAC can greatly benefit for SSAC's expertise in developing evidence-based and well informed positions.

## 5.6. Meeting with the Country-Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO)

The Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) and the Country-Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) held a bilateral session to discuss issues of mutual interest. The agenda focused on the topics of policy and procedural gaps in the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) policies pertaining to country-code Top Level Domains (ccTLDs), the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)+20, and the results of the ccNSO Domain Name System Abuse Standing Committee (DASC) survey.

Regarding the **policy and procedural gaps in the IANA policies pertaining to ccTLDs**, the ccNSO reported on the progress made to date on this matter.

The Policy Gaps Analysis Working Group of the ccNSO (PGA-WG) was established when the Lebanon ccTLD .lb had a situation in 2023, when the entity listed in the IANA database as the ccTLD manager, was not operating the county-code (cc) and did not wish to be named as operating the ccTLD. The underlying assumption in IANA practice had been that there was no situation where nobody wishes to operate a ccTLD, but instead possibly transfer the administration to another entity. IANA created a status caretaker operation to enter into the process of finding a new manager. This situation left the ccNSO in the fear that there was a gap in the global policies framework that guides how IANA deals with ccTLDs.

As a result, a formal and transparent structure of the ccNSO was established to identify possible gaps in existing ccNSO policies, guidance or practices pertaining to the delegation, transfer, revocation and retirement of ccTLDs; and advise the ccNSO Council whether to act on any gaps identified, related to IANA Naming functions of ccTLDs.

To date, the PGA-WG refined a draft overview document<sup>5</sup> of existing policies and guidance to create a useful community resource (feedback period closing in mid-January 2025), and has been assessing the IANA list of potential gaps and proposed methods to fill them (still underway).

In terms of next steps until the ICANN82 Meeting, the ccNSO will complete the assessment of the IANA list of potential gaps, prepare recommendations for the ccNSO Council, as well as assess any community feedback on the overview document.

On the **WSIS+20**, the ccNSO noted that many of the ccTLDs are engaged in their local Internet governance and with multiple stakeholder groups. This year's work was about the Global Digital Compact (GDC) and engagement in the process, where possible. The ccNSO created an Internet Governance Liaison Committee (IGLC) to regularly exchange on Internet governance trends and challenges, and stay informed on respective activities within local communities.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://community.icann.org/display/ccnsowkspc/Working+Documents>

Additionally, an informal discussion group was created for ICANN and the SO/AC community, to exchange on WSIS+20 related matters, such as ICANNs' activities at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), particularly at the June event, prior to the WSIS+20 review.

GAC members welcomed the ccNSO's initiatives and reminded that WSIS documents, which might be discussed during the review process, include important mentions to ccTLDs, such as the plan of action of Geneva that invites governments as appropriate to manage or supervise their ccTLDs, and the Tunis agenda on the information society, which mentions the relationship between countries and their ccTLDs. GAC members encouraged the ccNSO to engage beyond their community and build a platform that engages stakeholders from all countries and from all stakeholder groups; and for governments to reach out to their ccTLD managers.

Regarding the **DASC survey update**, the ccNSO updated the GAC on the recent findings of the survey, and reminded the committee that the DASC does not format policies or standards, since country codes are essentially sovereign entities and do not fall within the ICANN contractual jurisdiction. The ccNSO had the opportunity to compare both DASC surveys, conducted in 2022 and 2024, and see if there were any emerging trends. Questions in the 2024 survey were refined to improve clarity, and new questions were added to cover the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other industry developments since the 2022 survey.

Similarly to the 2022 survey, all ccTLDs were invited to respond and results provided a picture of the ccTLD abuse landscape, and the evolution over time. A total of 57 responses were received (56 in 2022) representing 100 ccTLDs, since many ccTLD managers operate more than one ccTLD. In summary, the 2024 survey results show that ccTLDs have better awareness of abuse levels, with a significant decrease in the number of respondents who were "not sure" of how much abuse they had (35% down to 21%), including a reduction in the amount of abuse reported (69% of respondents compared to 49% in 2022).

GAC members asked whether ccTLDs operators might be interested in joining the Registration Data Request Service (RDRS) since most of the participation comes from gTLD operators, considering that it is not a disclosure system and accessing to this system could facilitate the process for requesters reaching ccTLDs. ccNSO members noted that the policy framework for ccTLDs is determined in jurisdiction, and will depend on the privacy laws of that jurisdiction. The data access in the vast majority of ccTLDs are well established procedures for privacy, particularly by national law enforcement, or public interest authorities who wish to investigate abuse. There are difficulties in integrating very distinct sets of data which don't easily fit with the gTLD model.

Finally, GAC members asked whether there was any process in place to socialize good practices in terms of addressing DNS Abuse between the ccTLD and gTLD communities. ccNSO members noted that they want to remove abuse everywhere and cooperate very closely with gTLDs. For insurance, at ICANN82, the ccNSO will be facilitating meetings of ccTLD and gTLD registries on different issues, including DNS Abuse.

## 5.7. Meeting with the Address Supporting Organization (ASO)

The Addressing Supporting Organisation (ASO) met with the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) to discuss the latest developments on the proposed ICP-2 (v2) Principles.

ASO members started by providing an introduction on the criteria for establishment of new Regional Internet Registries (RIRs), developed in 2001, which were used to establish LACNIC and AFRINIC; whilst RIPE NCC, APINIC and ARIN, were established prior to ICANN, but still adhere to those principles.

The Number Resource Organization Executive Committee (NRO EC), consisting of the CEOs of each of the RIRs, except for AFRINIC which does not have a CEO, tasked the ASO Address Council (ASO AC) to help with two tasks (October 2023). First, to review and advise the NRO EC on its implementation procedures for validating and addressing ongoing RIR compliance with the Internet Coordination Policy v2 (ICP-2). Secondly, to establish and manage a process to update the ICP-2, to provide the RIR system with better accountability to the Internet community.

ASO members decided to review the set of proposed ICP-2 (v2) Principles in a two stage approach, with distilling the v2 project into a set of recommended core principles and subsequently, inviting the community's feedback on those principles, to finish by proceeding to draft a full text document. ASO members highlighted the principles that most justified this v2 project, organising the document into certain categories: Governance, RIR ecosystem, RIR lifecycle, recognition, operation, and derecognition.<sup>6</sup>

Following the presentation on the core ICP-2 Principles, the GAC Chair opened the floor for questions from committee members.

GAC members asked about the consultation process, considering the lack of representation in the African region (AFRINIC), and what could be done to mitigate this situation for additional representation from the African community in the drafting of the rules. GAC members also asked about how the ASO AC would manage conflicting messages from the consultation.

ASO members noted that the NRO Number Council (NRO NC) is currently seeking input on the principles, and conflicting feedback might require additional consultations.

Regarding the three vacant seats from the African community, the ICANN ASO Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) notes that one seat should be appointed by the AFRINIC Board, and the remaining two seats by the community at large, however, each RIR has its own processes. Since AFRINIC does not currently have a Board, but there is an official receiver that has the legal power of the Board, hence, the official receiver could appoint or reappoint the previous Board appointed representative to the ASO AC, and call for elections of community members, in accordance with the AFRINIC procedures.

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<sup>6</sup>  
[https://gac.icann.org/agendas/public/ICANN81%20-%20Session%2017%20-%20GAC%20ASO%20Bilateral%20Slides.pdf?language\\_id=1](https://gac.icann.org/agendas/public/ICANN81%20-%20Session%2017%20-%20GAC%20ASO%20Bilateral%20Slides.pdf?language_id=1)

Regarding the content of the principles, GAC members asked whether there is a definition that the community RIRs abide by. ASO members noted that community has different meanings to people but should involve anybody interested in shaping policies, including civil society, law enforcement agencies, or governments.

GAC members asked about case studies in Africa and whether those were taken into consideration when developing new principles, as well as if the ASO AC had the opportunity to get feedback from the African community. In response, ASO members are aware of the AFRINIC situation, to the extent the information is public, they would take those case studies into account.

Subsequently, GAC members asked about the anti-capture measure (*“An RIR must maintain governance rules and controls to prevent itself from becoming captured”*) and the ASO’s expectations of the community and the GAC on this principle. ASO members responded that they seek community input on the feasibility of anti-capture, such as different RIR structures, membership and voting procedures, and what potential risks this may involve.

GAC members asked how the ICANN Board will take into account the consultations and whether the final document will go through a new consultation or approval process. ASO members noted that the final document would go to the ICANN Board for ratification, as it did for the first version of the principles.

Lastly, GAC members asked about the authority aspect of the principles under the Governance category, in which the derecognition has to go through ICANN and take into consideration the input of each RIR, and whether a derecognition of a specific RIR would be in consultation with that RIR or the NRO. Additionally, if an RIR is derecognized, what would be the established procedures for the handoff of responsibilities. ASO members noted that all RIRs would be consulted, including the one under the process. ASO members shared past experiences amongst different RIRs, noting that in the event of a worst case scenario, RIRs should look into how to escrow their data in a neutral place.

Finally, GAC members asked whether the principles will vary from one RIR to another. ASO members replied that there would not vary but there might be some principles that do leave some matters within the discretion of each RIRs, as to how to implement that anti-capture could indeed be one of those.

## **5.8. Meeting with the Contracted Parties House (CPH) of the GNSO**

GAC Members met with representatives of the Generic Names Supporting Organization’s Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG) and the Registrants Stakeholder Group (RrSG) to discuss the latest developments in areas where they have common or overlapping interest, including Registration Data Accuracy, Next Round of New gTLDs and ICANN’s Community Participant Code of Conduct on SOIs and General Ethics Policy.

Regarding **Registration Data Accuracy** the CPH sought to leverage the opportunity of this meeting with the GAC to address the perception that accuracy is not important to registrars and to review current requirements and registrar practices.

Registrars reminded GAC Members that maintaining accurate and up-to-date domain name registration data is important to them as it allows registrars: to meet their legal, contractual, and policy obligation; to send important mandatory notices to the domain owner, such as renewal reminders; to contact the domain owner when problems arise, such as a compromised domain being used for DNS Abuse; and to protect registrants from identity theft and financial fraud.

Several GAC participants acknowledged and welcomed this affirmation of the importance of accuracy of registration data in the registrar community, noting that this is also recognized by the ICANN Board, and even, beyond ICANN, in legislation.

In the context of ICANN's contracts, registration data accuracy refers to the validation of "syntactical" accuracy (data must be in the expected format) and the verification of "operational" accuracy (data must be reliable to effectively communicate). The main contractual requirements for registrars are laid out in several documents which were reviewed during the registrars' presentation including:

- The Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA) including requirements (3.7.7 and subsections) that registrants provide accurate and reliable name, email address, phone number and postal address, and that registrars suspend or cancel domain names when this is not the case
- The Whois Accuracy Program Specification (WAPS) of the RAA which provides detailed requirements for validating and verifying the accuracy of domain name registration data and

Registrars provided an overview of their practices for maintaining data accuracy including through the contractually required validation and verification: ensuring all required data fields are completed correctly at the time of registration; using automated and manual tools to verify information, such as email deliverability and adherence to formatting standards; Contacting registrants via email or phone and requiring an affirmative response to confirm operational accuracy.

It was highlighted that some registrars exceed their contractual obligations and proceed to enhanced name and address validation using third-party tools such as databases similar to FedEx's systems in the United States. Additional means of enhanced address verification were discussed such as online mapping services, or using postal services. However, these tools and services were described as rarely available on a global scale, not always reliable when they exist and not cost effective for registrars.

In response to discussions of including identity verification as part of the processing of domain name registration, registrars argued that given their costs and liability risks involved, they can't adopt such systems, especially in the absence of evidence demonstrating either a problem with the accuracy of existing registration data or a benefit, such as disrupting or mitigating DNS Abuse. In terms of increased costs and impact on domain name prices, registrars referred to ICANN's previous assessment that identity verification on a global scale would cost 10-20 USD per registration. As it relates to liability of registrars they described the potential of errors in validation of identity or the



use of false documentation to circumvent validation systems, for which registrars argue there is emerging evidence.

A GAC Member shared a national perspective that implementation by the ccTLD of accuracy verification based on the national digital signature system led to the dramatic reduction in the prevalence of web shopping scams (“fake web shops”) which in turn was a significant benefit to society, which he reminded governments in the GAC are here to represent.

A GAC Observer wondered, in light of the registrar’s commitment to maintaining accurate registration data, why the rate of inaccuracy is as high as 40% in some estimations. In response, registrar representatives noted that such assessments would depend on the definition of accuracy that is being used and recalled that ICANN’s Accuracy Reporting System (ARS) [suspended since 2018] measured that in 90% of cases a registrant was contactable via email. As for more up-to-date estimation of accuracy, Registrar representatives noted that these would be challenged by the reduction of publicly accessible data since the entry into force of the EU General Data Protection Regulation and ICANN’s Temporary Specification for Registration Data.

In light of the challenges surrounding validation and verification on a global scale, a GAC Member inquired whether gTLD registrars have considered a risk-based approach focussing efforts on high risk registrations, an area in which EU ccTLDs have long standing experience. While representatives of the RrSG acknowledged awareness of recommendations to that effect by the NIS Cooperation Group<sup>7</sup>, they reported not being aware of such consideration at the moment.

Reacting to the presenter’s reference of work by the Universal Postal Union (UPU), a GAC Observer highlighted work being undertaken by this international organization to define a universal digital ID for postal addresses, which was proposed could be leveraged and potentially alleviate some challenges registrars are facing in the validation of mailing addresses.

In response to a GAC Member’s question regarding uncooperative registrars that would not appropriately enforce accuracy requirements, RrSG representatives recommended they be referred to ICANN Compliance, who would be expected to lead to the correction of the deficiencies. However, another GAC Member noted that it would be difficult to report data accuracy to ICANN Compliance given that most registration data is non-public. Registrars representatives indicated that registrars do get internal reports when registrants are not contactable and that third-parties using ICANN’s Registration Data Request Service (RDRS) could potentially file a complaint should they believe the data disclosed to them be inaccurate.

Pertaining to the **Next Round of New gTLDs**, the CPH asked GAC members how the GAC is planning to engage with new gTLD applicants in the next round and what plans, if any, the GAC has made for reviewing applications and interacting with applicants. CPH Members noted that the reason for the

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<sup>7</sup> A possible reference to the NIS Coordination Group [Recommendations for the implementation of NIS2 Directive Article 28](#) (September 2024)

question stemmed from statements made by the GAC in the ICANN80 Kigali Communiqué, where the GAC responded to the Board resolution from 8 June 2024 on Registry Voluntary Commitments (RVCs)/Public Interest Commitments (PICs), noting that the outlined proposal by the Board will impact the manner in which the GAC may consider applications and limits the types of remedial actions that can be taken to address GAC concerns. Additionally, CPH members noted that compared to the 2012 round of new gTLDs, potential applicants have been forthcoming in announcements regarding their upcoming applications, which wasn't the case in 2012.

GAC members noted that the committee has not held detailed discussions on the way forward for applicants, but have been interacting actively on matters pertaining to new gTLDs including the ASP, the IRT. On PICs/RVCs, GAC members noted they accept the Board's decision and commitment to the Bylaws, but that it would be difficult for the GAC to determine how it will address these points at this stage. GAC members noted that they were not familiar with information on potential applicants, but would be interested in receiving it if this is publicly available. Additionally, GAC members noted that in regards to planning for the next round application window, the GAC is waiting for the publication of the Applicant Guidebook (AGB) to plan internally how to proceed. Once the AGB is published, the GAC is planning to create a quick guide to the AGB intended for GAC members to prepare for the next round to digest the applications. Finally, GAC members noted the GAC's reactions will depend on the types of applications submitted, and based on that, governments will determine whether GAC Early Warnings should be submitted.

Finally, on **ICANN's Community Participant Code of Conduct on SOIs and General Ethics Policy**, the CPH and GAC members discussed the policy which is open for public comment following concerns that both the GAC and CPH disclosed on transparency in terms of who participants of the ICANN Multistakeholder Process are representing in the SOI. CPH members noted that the draft policy does address a lot of their concerns, since it states that if a participant cannot disclose who they are representing then they won't be permitted to participate in a Policy Development Process (PDP). As such, the CPH sees the policy as a positive development and that it solves some of the issues around transparency which were addressed. Further review will be carried out by the CPH but this is their initial reaction, noting alignment with GAC members on this matter. GAC members noted that the draft policy is a step in the right direction, and that the Board moved quickly to instruct ICANN org to draft a policy to address community concerns on this matter. GAC members are still reviewing this draft, but at a first review it seems to address the concerns shared by the GAC on transparency. GAC and CPH members noted alignment in their positions on this matter, pending further review from both parties on the details of the proposed policy.

The GAC Chair, and CPH leadership members shared appreciation for the opportunity to liaise on matters of interest to both parties, and the GAC Chair adjourned the meeting.

## 6. INTERNAL GAC MATTERS

### 6.1. GAC Wrap-Up Session

The GAC Chair began the traditional committee wrap-up session by welcoming the new ICANN Ombuds and giving her an opportunity to introduce herself. Elizabeth Fields briefly shared that she has been hired as the community “Ombuds” and will always be available at ICANN meetings and intersessionally to serve as an arbiter or facilitator of community interactions. She looks forward to learning more about the individual communities, including the GAC.

The GAC Support staff shared a list of likely follow-up items that the community will want to address in the weeks after ICANN81. Those matters included the following:

- ICANN82 Community Forum Planning (topic inputs, agenda setting calls, input on capacity development, etc.)
- Potential GAC Comments regarding Continuous Improvement Program
- GAC Position regarding Fundamental Bylaws impacting
- GAC Comments feedback to Board and comments regarding ccNSO Policy recommendations regarding
- GAC consideration of Operating Principle Amendment proposals related to extension of service (terms) for GAC C-VC.
- Consideration of further GAC collaboration efforts regarding Internet governance (Wednesday special informal session).
- Follow-Up on Urgent Request triad negotiations with Board and GNSO
- GAC Annual Plan Tracking by Caretakers and Committee

The GAC Support staff also identified a number of key dates for committee awareness in the post-ICANN81 time period. They included:

- Publication of GAC ICANN81 Communiqué - 18 November 2024
- ICANN81 GAC Minutes ~ December 2024
- Call for Topics for ICANN82 (policy topics, WG updates, joint sessions) ~ due December/January 2024
- ICANN82 GAC Agenda Setting Calls (to review preliminary agenda) ~ January/February 2024
- ICANN82 Community Forum - 08-13 March 2025; Seattle - USA

The GAC Chair and staff asked GAC attendees to share any “lessons-learned” or other ideas to help improve the meeting preparation process or the meeting implementation itself. A number of suggestions and recommendations were made including:

- Capacity development should continue to be a component of GAC gatherings. The information to be shared can be very valuable to new and existing GAC representatives.
- Expand and evolve committee capacity development activities into a full GAC effort - not just an activity of the USRWG.
- Consider other session formats for capacity development activities.

- Bilateral community interactions were very effective at this meeting - consider how to manage them going forward, including staggering them throughout the meeting cycle and making the sessions themselves more interactive, rather than lectures
- Whenever possible, the ICANN Public Forum should not conflict with a GAC session - try to plan ICANN82 schedule accordingly
- Consider reviving the GAC open mic session which was tested at the ICANN78 Hamburg meeting
- Try harder to identify socializing opportunities for GAC representatives in the meeting schedule - so they can get to know each other better
- Encourage each other as GAC representatives to be more active - e.g., more ballots cast in GAC elections
- Encourage committee feedback and reactions to the “Art of the GAC Communique” document to encourage earlier contributions, where possible.

**Action Point:**

- **GAC Support staff and Leadership** to consider and incorporate some of the committee suggestions as plans develop for ICANN82 meeting.

# # #

**Attachment 1 - ICANN81 Hybrid Annual General Meeting - GAC ATTENDEES LIST**

<b>GAC Members (83)</b>		
Argentina	India	Philippines
Armenia	Indonesia	Portugal
Australia	Iran	Qatar
Austria	Iraq	Romania
Bangladesh	Israel	Russian Federation
Belarus	Italy	Rwanda
Belgium	Jamaica	Sao Tome and Principe
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Japan	Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of
Brazil	Kenya	Serbia
Burkina Faso	Korea, Republic of	Singapore
Cambodia	Kuwait	Slovakia
Canada	Lao, People's Democratic Republic	Spain
Cayman Islands	Lebanon	Suriname
Chad, Republic of	Libya	Sweden
China	Lichtenstein	Switzerland
Colombia	Malaysia	Chinese Taipei
Côte d'Ivoire	Mauritania	Thailand
Croatia	Mongolia	Timor-Leste
Cyprus	Morocco	Trinidad and Tobago
Czech Republic	Mozambique	Tunisia
Denmark	Myanmar, Republic of the Union	Türkiye
Egypt	Netherlands	Uganda
European Commission	Niger	United Arab Emirates
Gabon	Nigeria	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Georgia	Niue	United States of America
Germany	Oman	Uruguay
Holy See - Vatican City State	Papua New Guinea	Viet Nam
Hong Kong, China	Paraguay	

<b>GAC Observers (8)</b>	
Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU)	Smart Africa
Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO)	Universal Postal Union (UPU)
League of Arab States	World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)	
REGULATEL	

## Attachment 2 - ICANN81 Action Points Compilation

#	Subject Matter	Action Point
1	New gTLDs Next Round	<b>GAC Topic Leads</b> to draft a response to the ICANN Board on the proposed path forward pertaining to contention sets, in response to the Board letter submitted to the GAC Chair prior to ICANN81.
2	GOPE WG	<b>GAC Support Staff</b> to facilitate scheduling of a GAC wide meeting in December 2024 to further discuss this topic.
3	Wrap-Up Session	<b>GAC Support staff and Leadership</b> to consider and incorporate some of the committee suggestions as plans develop for ICANN82 meeting.