COMMONWEALTH - GOVERNMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GAC) MEETING AT ICANN 80

11 June 2024 from 12:15-13:15 Local time

Meeting Room AD 1

Kigali, Rwanda

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions (Co-Chairs)
2. Matters Arising from ICAN79 San Juan
3. High Level Government Meeting (HLGM) Recap
4. WSIS+20 Recap
5. New gTLD Program update – Applicant Support Programme
6. Update from CTO
7. AoB

Attendees

Representatives of the following Commonwealth countries were in attendance.

1. Antigua & Barbuda
2. Australia
3. Bangladesh
4. Canada
5. Eswatini
6. Ghana
7. Grenada
8. Jamaica
9. Kenya
10. Nigeria
11. Pakistan
12. Papua New Guinea
13. Rwanda
14. St. Kitts & Nevis
15. Surinam
16. Trinidad & Tobago
17. Uganda
18. United Kingdom

Also in attendance were representatives from Commonwealth Secretariat, ICANN, UPU, ISOC and CTU.

Welcome Remarks and Introductions

The Co-chairs from Papua New Guinea and Australia welcomed members and invited them for a round of introductions.

The next agenda item was the matter arising from ICANN79 meeting regarding comments on the draft terms of reference for the Commonwealth GAC group. The chair briefly touched on the purpose of the terms of reference indicating that it is a high-level document detailing the group's engagements. Canada and United Kingdom reiterated the fact that the group's engagement is informal, and it provides a platform for sharing ideas on GAC matters and ICANN in general.

Co-chairs concluded that the ToR documents to be re-circulated for final comments and thereafter the matter will be concluded.

High Level Government Meeting Recap

The Rwanda GAC representative gave highlights the HLGM meeting that took place the day before ICANN80. Some of the key highlights included:

Discussion on the multistakeholder model and the importance to continue enhancing its effectiveness, thus ensuring it remains relevant and adaptive to keep an open, free, secure and reliable Internet.

The importance of co-operation in global internet governance. Private sector entities and civil society were urged to reinforce commitment to a governmental structure that is equitable and accountable.

Discussion on issues of digital divide noting that electricity must be part of the digital ecosystem. The HLGM also featured a session on support for the development of meaningful connectivity in Africa. There was a presentation on the status and challenges in Africa urging coordinated efforts to avoid duplication of resources.

WSIS+20 Recap

The United Kingdom provided an update on the concluded WSIS+20 forum that took place in Geneva, Switzerland from 27 to 31 May 2024. The UK mentioned that for years there has been a push for ICANN to be involved in the UN process. The 2024 WSIS+20 will lead to a UN process to adapt a resolution on the future of WSIS process and global UN IGF including their mandate. Members were urged for keep an eye on other UN processes that will lead up to the WSIS+20 process such as the ITU Council working group on WSIS and the Global Digital Compact discussions.

New gTLD Program update – Applicant Support Programme

The United Kingdom provided an update on the new gTLD program specifically focusing on the ICANN applicant support programme. It was noted that there is still a lot of questions on the topic and especially from underserved regions and members were urged to follow and pay attention to the ongoing discussions. They were also encouraged to air their views during the drafting sessions of the GAC communique. Commonwealth countries were also advised to spread the word in-country about the applicant support programme to raise awareness in their communities.

Update from CTO

The Secretary General of CTO gave an update of two events that CTO hosted in London, UK in the month of May. The Digital Week London from 20-23 May 2024 which also featured a cybersecurity event called CyberKeys 2024. It was an immersive experience that demonstrated and explain the extent of the risks in cyberspace; providing insight into how the risks can be minimised and traps avoided. The Secretary General also announced the upcoming CTO Leadership masterclass planned for August 2024 in the United Kingdom. This intensive five-day program is designed to sharpen the leadership acumen of senior ICT executives by focusing on strategic thinking, emotional intelligence, stakeholder engagement, and effective influence on the national and global stage. The CTO shared the leadership programme documents on the mailing list after the meeting.

Any Other Business (AoB)

The Co-chairs opened the floor to any other matters from member. Australia proposed exploring opportunities for intersession calls in between ICANN meetings. Australia also urged members to consider challenges that the Commonwealth GAC group can assist members with including topics of discussion and experts who could be invited to talk on specific subject matters. This was seconded by Uganda. Papua New Guinea reminded member to participate the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) meeting schedule for Wednesday that week.

Regarding the issue of advancing the Commonwealth GAC group activities the CTO Secretary General proposed that the CTO was ready to host a Commonwealth GAC portal to facilitate the group's work. Additionally Ghana proposed mentoring of new members and supporting countries that are struggling with the ccTLD redelegation.