GAC-CDW Bahrain 2019

Discussions Held

(This is a joint report by Baher Esmat, Laurent Ferrali, and Fahd Batayneh, Government Engagement and Global Stakeholder Engagement Teams)

Summary
- The GAC Under-Served Regions Working Group (USRWG) has identified two workshops to be held during this fiscal year; one in the Pacific Islands and the other in the Middle East.

- This was the second GAC capacity building workshop held in the Middle East. The first one was held at ICANN60 in Abu Dhabi.

- The workshop was hosted by the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of Bahrain (TRA), and attended by around 15 participants from the Governments of Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Somalia, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates, in addition to 2 ITU staff members; one from the Arab Regional Office and the other the Head of the Capacity and Skills Development Division.

- The agenda of the workshop covered the following main items:
  - ICANN's Role and Ecosystem
  - Understanding the Role of the GAC
  - The Domain Name System
  - ICANN's Policy Development Process
  - DNS Security and Engagement with Law Enforcement Agencies
  - Improving the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model

  And was covered by Baher Esmat, Laurent Ferrali, Fahd Batayneh, and Manal Ismail, the GAC Chair.

- Most of the participants were engaging in the discussions. They found the workshop useful and some suggested that similar workshops or updates should take place in the region on a more regular basis.

Detail

During ICANN65 meeting, members of the GAC Underserved Regions Working Group along with the GAC representatives of Egypt got together with the GE/GSE team to discuss the possibility of organizing the workshop in the margin of an ITU regional capacity building workshop planned in Bahrain the first week of October 2019. We followed up with regional GAC representatives to seek feedback if there was an interest in such a workshop. We received positive responses from about 10 of them. We also reached out to our contacts at the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of Bahrain (TRA) to ask them if they would be willing to host the workshop. The TRA welcomed the opportunity and confirmed their willingness to host.

Once the venue and dates were confirmed, the GAC Secretariat circulated a survey seeking input on the agenda of the workshop. The feedback received was very good to develop an initial agenda, but the agenda had some missing links due to the low relative response rate, and so we decided to write once again to GAC members who showed interest in attending the workshop asking them for input and suggestions. This exercise was useful in building a more comprehensive agenda that satisfies the expectations of those willing to attend. And once we had a draft agenda, it was shared with the GAC Chair.

The TRA's Acting General Director inaugurated the workshop and acknowledged ICANN and the GAC for holding the workshop in Bahrain. This was followed by opening remarks by Manal Ismail, Susan Teltscher of the ITU, and Baher Esmat. In her remarks, Susan said that the ITU welcomes the cooperation with ICANN in the Middle East and noted that besides ITU's participation in this workshop that ICANN together with ISOC and RIPE NCC are participating in the ITU IG workshop that will be held in Bahrain right after this workshop.

The first session on "**ICANN's Role and Ecosystem**" was led by Baher. He covered the following topics: ICANN's mission, and the coordination role we play with the different actors; the 3 components of the ICANN's ecosystem: the Community, Board, and Organization; ICANN's Multistakeholder model and the different SOs and ACs; the board and its composition, in addition to the NomCom; ICANN org and what it does including the IANA Functions, the IANA Stewardship Transition, and PTI. Questions raised were around decision making process at ICANN, IDNs, delegation and re-delegation process, the IANA functions and PTI.

Next was "**Understand the Role of the GAC**" which was led by both Laurent and Manal. They gave an introduction about the GAC, its advisory role, its members and observers, and the GAC Leadership. The next slides covered topics such as the role of the GAC as defined in the ICANN Bylaws, how the GAC interacts with the ICANN Board, GAC advice, a flowchart on GAC advice to the board, work modalities of the GAC, and the GAC Under-Served Regions WG. The interaction between the GAC and the different ICANN teams (e.g. GSE, GE, and Policy Development Team) was also covered. Finally, Manal and Laurent spoke about why should governments engage in ICANN's work.

Next was "**The Domain Name System**" led by Fahd. He spoke about why we use domain names, domain name terminology, top level domains and their types, root-servers and their instances, country codes and the fact that they are not just for countries but rather for economies as well. Next was gTLDs; both legacy and new, with a timeline shared showing when and what TLDs were introduced. New gtLDs were covered, and so were IDNs. We then spoke a little about Universal Acceptance, the UASG, and how to get involved. The topic concluded with some insights on domain name dispute resolution, UDRP, the UDRP providers, and the fact that UDRP is for gTLDs, and that ccTLDs must customize their DRP; if any.

The next topic on "**ICANN's Policy Development Process**" was led by Laurent. Laurent went through how the community develops policies, and shared infographics on ccNSO/GNSO/ASO

PDP. He then shared examples on policies that have been developed within the ASO, GNSO, and ccNSO, as well as policies currently being tackled.

The session on "**DNS Security and Engagement with LEAs**" was led by Fahd. He spoke about ICANN's role in security which revolves around SSR of the Unique Identifier System, user trust in the system, and capacity development. He then spoke about DNSSEC, how it works, and how to benefit from using it. He touched upon the KSK rollover; what it is and what it is not, and dempuked myths around the possible Internet shutdown that was rumored to happen on 10-11 October 2018. Abuse and Misuse was then touched upon, and examples were shared such as Operation Avalanche, Mirai, My EtherWallet.com, DNSpionage and Sea Turtle, and Domain Names and Emojis. Manal chimed in and shared discussions held within the GAC on Abuse and Misuse. She mentioned DAAR, too.

The last session of the workshop was on "**Improving the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model**". The session was led by Manal. She spoke about the different phases of the work in hand; i.e.:

1. **Developing Issues List** - She spoke about the exercise to identify issues. 21 issues were identified, were consolidated to 8, and finally were grouped to 3 to fit into relevant goals of ICANN's strategic plan.
2. **Develop the Work Plan** - This is the current phase where Manal spoke about the work undertaken so far. She also touched upon recent and upcoming developments related to this phase.
3. **Work on solutions addressing the identified issues according to the agreed work plan**

Baher then took the floor and suggested ways to engage with ICANN. He mentioned the different engagement activities we hold in the Middle East. He touched upon the funding programs offered such as the fellowship, NextGen, and the GAC Travel Support. He then spoke about ICANN Learn and encouraged attendees to attend some of the courses there. He encouraged attendees to attend ICANN66 Prep Week on the week of 14-18 October, and encouraged those who do not plan to be in Montreal to follow the discussions remotely. Some of the discussions and comments received included:

- Hold a similar workshop on a more regular basis at a regional event that is of relevance. Events suggested could be related to the League of Arab States, ITU Arab Regional, or the GCC Council. The update need not be a full day, but rather a couple of hours.
- We encouraged attendees to subscribe to the Middle East ICANN mailing list so that they can receive updates from us.
- Contributing to policy development does not require a certain education, but rather is an interest and a practice.
- Fahd shared his experience as a fellow, and how he got into the IG world before joining ICANN as staff 6 years ago.

- In engaging with ICANN, we encouraged attendees to follow discussions and constituencies that are of interest to them.
- Some of the attendees on the GAC mailing list spoke about the high volume of emails exchanged on the list. We suggested that they follow specific threads that could be of interest to them.
- We encouraged attendees to reach out to the regional team if they need any help with any ICANN related matter.

In all sessions, either Manal, Baher, Laurent, or Fahd intervened and provided more insights.

The master slide deck of the whole workshop is attached to this EAR on SF, in addition to the agenda.

Staff Observations

It was a good avenue to update and inform GAC representatives from the region on ICANN and GAC related work. The feedback was positive, with some suggesting that the region needs more of such workshops / updates more regularly.

Media Interview Links

None

Follow-Up Issues

Bahrain suggested that they are going to suggest to the Arab ITU regional office to invite ICANN to the relevant regional events to provide updates in relation to ICANN/GAC related issues.

ICANN GSE shall coordinate with the ITU regional team and seek to have more joint activities in the region. Baher to arrange for a meeting with the ITU team in Cairo.