Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) Capacity development workshop for Middle East region and new comers

Venue: Abu Dhabi National exhibition centre, United Arab Emirates (UAE)
Date: Saturday 28, October 2017
Host: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Government and Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)
Supported by: ICANN GE/GSE/DPRD/Communications/GAC, ICANN Board and ICANN President and CEO

Executive Summary
The third GAC regional capacity development workshop took place in Abu Dhabi on Saturday 28th October 2017. The workshop was held in advance of the GAC face to face meeting scheduled to take place during ICANN 60.
The workshop was attended by 28 government representatives. The main objective was to lower barriers to participation and increase diversity.
The workshop was non-technical, focussing on Internet governance, ICANN and GAC's policy development process. It was delivered through a panel of experts on ICANN's role in the Internet governance ecosystem, plenary discussions on ICANNs policy development processes, the role of the GAC and challenges faced by under-served regions GAC members.
Participants noted that the workshop provided a great opportunity to learn and understand current ICANN policy issues and GAC working methods.

Sponsors and partners
- ICANN GE/GSE/DPRD and GAC under-Served Regions Working Group
- ICANN Board and CEO
- The United Arab Emirates Government
- Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

Background

At ICANN56 in Helsinki, the GAC Working Group on Underserved Regions discussed the feasibility of regional focused capacity development workshops for GAC members from under-served regions. The rationale for this regional approach is to lower barriers to participation while increasing diversity and effective participation of GAC members from under-served regions on the functioning of ICANN.

The first regional workshop took place in Nairobi in January 2017 co-hosted by the government of Kenya, the second was in Fiji, co-hosted by the government of Fiji.

The Middle East workshop that took place in Abu Dhabi on 28 October 2017 was co-hosted by the United Arab Emirates government. It was the third regional workshop.

The workshop was co-organised with the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA) of UAE and OIC. It was announced on various GAC mailing lists, ICANN website and social media.

The preparation process involved close coordination with TRA UAE and OIC representatives to invite government representatives from the Middle East region. In addition, the GAC Under-Served Regions Working Group (USRWG) conducted outreach and awareness efforts in collaboration with Government Engagement (GE) and Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) teams.

The workshop took the form of presentations by GAC Chair Thomas Schneider, GAC Vice Chair Manal Ismail, ICANN Board of Directors Khaled Koubaa, ICANN Board Vice Chair Cherine Chalaby, ICANN President and CEO Goran Marby as well as a panel of experts on internet government ecocystem.

Objectives
The workshop had the following objectives:
- Increase knowledge of stakeholders on the functioning of ICANN
- Strengthen diversity of participation in ICANN
- Lower barriers to participation in ICANN
- Increase participation of GAC members from USR

Workshop process
The workshop was non-technical, focussing on Internet governance, ICANN, the GAC's eorking methods and ICANNs policy development process. A panel of experts presented and discussed ICANN's role in the broader Internet governance ecosystem. Plenary discussions ensued on ICANNs policy development processes, the role of the GAC and challenges faced by under-served regions GAC members. Presentations were made by the GAC chair Thomas Schneider, GAC vice chair Manal Ismail, Alice Munyua and ICANN board member Khaled Koubaa. A post workshop evaluation was conducted to determine whether the objectives had been met.

Activities carried out
Due to schedule and other limitations the workshop was only half a day and took place on 28th October 2017 from 9.00am to 13.00hrs.

Welcome and introductions by the GAC under-served regions working group and GE. Opening session was presented by GE, ICANN CEO, the GAC chair and the UAE GAC representative.

The Co-chair of the USRWG and GE presented the overall objective of the workshop as lowering barriers to participation and increasing diversity in ICANN.
The GE noted that the Middle East Workshop formed part of the broader GAC capacity development initiative, which aims at increasing meaningful participation in the GAC and CANN.

The opening session
GE, GAC USRWG, GAC chair and vice chair, ICANN board and CEO, GSE and members of the NCUC.

The ICANN CEO Goran Marby welcomed all participants. He noted that ICANN is committed to supporting the capacity development initiative of the GAC. He recalled that it forms part of the broader ICANN objectives to lower barriers to participation and increase diversity. He thanked the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for co-organising and hosting the workshop.

The GAC chair, Thomas Shneider welcomed all governments and thanked the UAE and ICANN for organising the workshop. He noted that the GAC is an Advisory Committee, which advises the ICANN Board on issues relating to public policy. Membership is made up of national governments and distinct economies, with a current membership of approximately 200.
On how the GAC interacts with the board, Schneider noted that Board notifies the GAC of proposal raising public policy issues. The GAC often also submits issues to the Board directly by way of comment, advice, recommending action, new policy development, or revision to existing policies. The GAC holds three face to face meetings per year where it discusses issues with the ICANN Board and other ICANN constituencies. Intersessionally, the GAC woks through various working groups, mailing lists and conference calls and is currently supported by an independent secretariat and ICANN Policy Staff.
After every face to face meeting, the GAC develops a communiqué. The first, he recalled was at the Singapore meeting in 1999. The "Communiqué" he noted acts as the official GAC statement after every face to face meeting. This is the main vehicle that the GAC uses to provide the ICANN board with GAC advice. The communiqué is developed through consensus. He noted that the GAC is an important advisory committee, which plays a critical public policy role and encouraged all government representatives to participate actively in all the policy streams currently being discussed. He thanked the Under-Served Regions Working Group (USRWG) and ICANN's Government Engagement (GE) for organising the capacity development initiative. The GAC, he said fully supports this capacity development initiative and urged ICANN to continue supporting the GAC efforts towards lowering participation barriers. He thanked ICANN's board and President CEO for their continued support.

He welcomed the United Arab Emirates (UAE) representative to open the workshop.

The UAE GAC representative Abdulrahman Al Marzouqi welcomed all participants to the UAE. He noted that the UAE fully supports the GAC capacity development initiative in its attempt to ensure that more governments from under-served regions are able to meaningfully participate in GAC and ICANN policy processes. He thanked ICANNs government engagement Dr. Tarek Kamel and his team, he also thanked Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) team for organising the meeting.
He declared the workshop opened.

Objectives of the meeting session and brief on the Under-Served Regions Working Group (USRWG)

The USRWG Pua Hunter and Alice Munyua discussed the objectives of the workshop. They welcomed participants to share their views on any additional objectives. The GAC capacity development initiative aims at addressing the persistent lack of awareness and and understanding of how ICANN works and contributes to the broader objective of lowering barriers to participation as well as increasing diversity. This they noted is being achieved through several regional workshops. So far, the Middle East was the third. The first was held in Nairobi in January 2017 for the Africa region, the second was held in Fiji in April 2017 for Pacific Island states. The fourth they said would be held in Nepal for Asia region, fifth in San Juan for the Caribbean and sixth and last of the regional series would be in Panama for Latin America. They thanked and welcomed all participants and presenters and encouraged active participation.

Introduction to ICANN and its role in the Middle East Region Baher Esmat, VP Middle East

Baher Esmat, ICANN's Vice President for Stakeholder Engagement in the Middle East presented on ICANN and its engagement work in the Middle East. His presentation provided an overview on ICANN's role in the global Internet ecosystem illustrating the three components of ICANN: Community, Board and the Organization; and the role of each part in developing and implementing DNS related policies. The presentation shared information about the Fellowship Program and ICANN Learn as means to encourage more participation in ICANN. Baher also spoke to the GSE team's work in the Middle East and highlighted key projects and activities that have been taking place as part of the ICANN regional strategy in the Middle East.

Panel: Role of ICANN in the Internet Governance (IG) Ecosystem: Chengetai Masango, Wolfgang Kleinwaechter, William Drake and Nii Quaynor

The panellists provided an introduction to IG and how it relates to ICANN. Internet Governance remains a balance of complex dynamics. There are many organisations that play a role in and around the Internet's functions. No one entity has complete responsibility for the governance of the Internet. Instead several organisations play a role in governing the internet. ICANN focuses on the Internet's system of unique identifiers, which is a small but critical role.

IG has evolved over time and various groups have attempted to develop working definitions. As the internet first opened to commerce and the wider public in the mid-1990s, the term referred to a limited set of policy issues associated with the global synchronization and management of domain names.

As the internet evolved, the definition of internet governance broadened. In 2005 the United Nations held the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) which further defined internet governance as *"the development and application by governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared*

principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programs that shape the evolution and use of the internet."

There are concepts in IG that relate to the technical infrastructure behind its operations, which include numbering and naming systems and general oversight of the domain name system, among others. The other aspect is the governance of 'how the Internet is used' in terms of sharing information and content, among others. This aspect does not form part of ICANN's mandate and focuses more on national level policies and laws.

The IGF, "*an outcome of the WSIS was a noteworthy as it was an international embrace of the multistakeholder model used by ICANN. The multi-stakeholder approach involves having all stakeholders participating in policy process on an equal footing*".

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a forum for multistakeholder dialogue on public policy issues related to key elements of Internet. Its main purpose is to maximize the opportunity for open and inclusive dialogue and the exchange of ideas on Internet governance (IG) related issues, among others. The IGF has a multi stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), which was established by the United Nations Secretary General to prepare the substantive agenda and programme for the IGF meetings. The MAG comprises of Governments, Civil Society, Technical Community, Private Sector and Intergovernmental Organizations. There are varying views on the value of the IGF. Some stakeholders view the IGFs lack of decision making process as a weakness and would like to see an IGF that produces concrete results. While others view this as a strength.

Update on ICANN constituencies and cross community working groups (Khaled Koubaa, Manal Ismail and Alice Munyua)

Manal Ismail, GAC vice chair took participants through the GAC working methods and the GAC agenda for Abu Dhabi. She noted that GAC advice is based on activities of ICANN as they relate to concerns of governments, particularly matters where there may be an interaction between ICANN's policies and various laws and international agreements or where they may affect public policy issues. GAC Advice takes the form of written communication where the specific advice is clearly marked as such and has a clearly stated proposal for action. GAC advice is usually presented in various forms including the communiqué issued at the end of each GAC meeting, letters signed by the GAC Chair on behalf of the GAC, overarching "principles" and "issues" as well as interim issues documents.

The GAC sets its own operating principles. The current ones date back to 2011. They are under review. The GACs face to face agenda is developed intersessionally and involves several agenda setting calls. Face to face meetings are held three times a year in conjunction with ICANN meetings, are open by default and includes real-time interpretation in 6 UN languages and Portuguese.

GAC Working Groups (WGs) are created as necessary and focus on particular areas either related to substance or administrative issues. Each working group has an agreed Terms of Reference (TOR), may have a dedicated mailing list, separate face to face meetings and/or their own conference calls. The WGs provide necessary briefs before face to face meetings and regular reports to GAC plenaries. While some are ongoing, like the USRWG, others have specific life spans and are closed as soon as they achieve their mandate.

On the GAC's role in the empowered community, the GAC is a decisional participant with formal obligations under the new bylaws to receive and initiate petitions, participate in the conduct of community calls and forums and support, reject or abstain from a collective exercise of one of the new powers. As a decisional participant, the GAC can initiate and submit a petition, which is subject to GAC discussions.

Alice Munyua noted that ICANN works through its various constituencies, the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO), the Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO), the Address Supporting Organization (ASO), the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC), Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC) and the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC).

The GAC engages in bilateral work with the various SO and AC's. The GSNO and GAC had a working group on GAC early engagement in GNSO policy development processes (PDPs). This working group finalized its work and was closed. This WG developed a set of recommendations that included, a GNSO Liaison to the GAC, a Quick Look Mechanism (QLM) to facilitate GAC early engagement in early phases of GNSO PDP, regular updates provided to the GAC and Joint GAC-GNSO leadership meeting prior to each ICANN meeting. With the CCNSO, the GAC holds bilateral meetings to discuss various issues. In Abu Dhabi, the GAC and CCNSO will discuss the ISO 3166 three letter codes as TLDs, policy development on country & territory names, the use of Geographic names at the Top Level (WT5), ccTLD retirement update, Delegation, Re-delegation & Retirement of ccTLDs and the release of 2-character codes at the second level among other issues. With ALAC, the GAC intends to discuss new gTLD subsequent procedures, country and territory names, and community based applications, lowering Barriers to Participation among other topics.

The GAC also participates on Cross Community Working Groups (CCWGs) as a Chartering Organization. Typically, GAC members who volunteer to represent the GAC on CCWG's represent their individual governments' views but If a GAC consensus position exists it could be referenced.

Manal took the participants through the GAC Abu Dhabi agenda, which includes
- Jurisdictional Challenges for ICANN
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Implications for ICANN
- Domain Name System (DNS) Abuse Reporting

- Community Feedback on Concluding CCWG on Accountability - Work Stream (WS2)
- Operating Standards for Specific Reviews
- Discussions of the. Amazon Independent Review Panel Final Declaration
- ICANN Jurisdiction
- New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP – new cross-community Work Track 5 on geographic names at the top level
- WHOIS/RDS and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- IGOs/INGOs and Red Cross Protections
- DNS Abuse mitigation
- Lowering barriers to community participation

She encouraged all participants to attend GAC sessions and provided them with various avenues for participation, including the mailing lists and website links.

The IANA transition (Khaled Koubaa, ICANN board)

The Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) is responsible for coordinating some of the Internet's technical functions – specifically, allocating and maintaining the unique codes and numbering systems that allow the Internet to operate smoothly.

The IANA stewardship transition was completed on 30 September 2016. The transition, he said was the culmination of a long term effort to establish a multistakeholder, private-sector led system for the global coordination of the DNS. The community proposed that a new legal entity be created to perform the IANA functions. The public Technical Identifiers (PTI) was therefore created as an ICANN affiliate to perform these functions on behalf of ICANN. The PTI Articles describe the purpose of PTI, ICANN's role as the sole member, as well as other legal specifications relating to the corporate and non-profit standing of PTI. In addition, a new Service Level Expectations (SLEs) replaced the performance standards for the IANA functions. The new SLEs requires PTI to "measure, record, and report additional details of transaction times for root zone change request processing"

ICANN entered into a Service Level Agreement with the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) for the performance of the IANA number services and is accountable for the performance of the IANA number services to the RIRs.

The Empowered Community, he noted has nine powers to ensure the ICANN Board and Organization are accountable. In addition, the empowered community has a process to raise concerns with an action or inaction made by the ICANN Board or organization. This escalation process gives ICANN's SOs and ACs opportunities to discuss solutions with the ICANN Board. He presented the seven core steps in the escalation process. Escalation of a concern can be stopped at any point if a threshold is not met or if a solution is found.

Closing remarks: Cherine Chalaby (ICANN Board Vice Chair) Tarek Kamel (ICANN Senior Advisor to the President of ICANN for Government Engagement)

Tarek Kamel thanked the ICANN board and the ICANN board vice chair for supporting the work of the GE and GAC capacity development initiative. He extended his appreciation to the GAC leadership, GAC chair and vice chair for their continuous support for the capacity development work. He appreciated all the work of the USRWG and all ICANN organisation team members involved in implementing this GAC capacity development initiative, which will continue providing critical support for under-served regions government representatives to enable meaningful participation. He noted that the GE team will continue to work with the GAC USRWG to ensure all other regions have their capacity development workshops. After, which we will focus on more in depth thematic training.

ICANN Board Vice chair, Cherine Chalaby thanked the UAE and OIC for co-hosting the workshop with ICANN. He extended his appreciation to all participants for taking their time to attend and contribute to the workshop. He reiterated ICANN's board support for the GAC capacity development initiative and noted that it contributes to one of ICANN's broader and critical objectives of enabling diversity. The board, he said will continue to support this initiative.

Achievements/outcomes
Based on the responses to the post evaluation survey, the workshop achieved the following:
-Increased awareness of ICANN and GAC
- Increased awareness of governments in ICANN ecosystem
- Increased awareness of ICANN policy development process
- Increased awareness of the GAC's working methods, consensus development, GAC's relation to other constituencies, current policy issues being considered by the GAC.

Conclusion/recommendations from workshop participants
-All GAC members should be invited
-After regional workshops, focus should be on thematic areas
-Another more detailed workshop for the ME region
-Another more detailed workshop for the Pacific islands

Presentations can be found here:
https://icann60abudhabi2017.sched.com/event/CbHu