

Terms of Reference Commonwealth – GAC

Terms of Reference

Commonwealth – GAC Group

1. Background

Commonwealth GAC is a sub-group of the ICANN GAC membership from Commonwealth countries. The main purpose of the group is to provide a platform that is conducive for Commonwealth countries to freely share information and express their views and position on GAC issues. This is especially true when new GAC representatives attend ICANN meetings and are understandably hesitant in participating fully in GAC proceedings. The group also assists Commonwealth GAC representatives to meet and network and share experiences, providing the opportunity for more seasoned members to guide newer members through key issues and processes of the GAC. Thereby facilitating seamless onboarding of new GAC members from Commonwealth countries.

At the meeting held in the margins of ICANN78 in Hamburg, Germany, Ghana inquired why the Commonwealth group is not a formal grouping at ICANN. The Co-chair from Australia responded that the issue can be taken to main GAC, but before then there is urgent need to develop a Terms of Reference (ToR) for the group to formalise discussions. Members present agreed on the need for the ToR to guide the activities of the group so that it can respond effectively to the needs of the Commonwealth. It is imperative to note that despite numerous meetings that Commonwealth GAC have held since its establishment during ICANN Meetings, ICANN78 meeting stirred the impetus for the drafting of a ToR.

2. Status

Commonwealth GAC is an informal assembly of GAC representatives from Commonwealth countries. It has no registered offices and no legal personality. Its work is facilitated by the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO).

3. Objective

The objective of the Commonwealth GAC is to foster discussion and collaboration between Commonwealth countries at ICANN meetings.

The specific responsibilities include:

- Sharing information on pertinent issues, whether at ICANN or elsewhere, that may be of interest to Commonwealth countries.
- Identifying the scope of issues and policy priorities and addressing them at the ICANN meetings.
- Convening meetings to discuss the issues identified and other matters of concern to the Commonwealth.

- Discussing relevant issues and positions of Commonwealth countries at the regional and global levels for representation at ICANN Meetings.
- Ensuring equity and impartiality in decision-making for the greater good of the Commonwealth.

4. Membership and Composition

Member countries of the Commonwealth shall be eligible for membership in the Commonwealth GAC.

Member countries will be represented by their respective GAC Representatives.

The membership shall be able, subject to the agreement, to invite other States or stakeholder bodies to take part in meetings.

5. Governance Structure

The current leadership structure is as follows.

- ***Co-Chairs Chair***
Australia
Papua New Guinea
- The CTO provides secretariat support for the Commonwealth GAC.

6. Operating Procedures

- i. The Commonwealth GAC is free to adopt its own working methods and rules of procedure within its terms of reference.
- ii. The Co-Chairs of the Commonwealth GAC will be selected by the Group Members.
- iii. Commonwealth Member representatives shall retain membership until appointment of their successors.
- iv. The CTO Secretariat will support the functions and operations of the Commonwealth GAC. The CTO Secretary General or a duly appointed representative will serve as secretary of the Commonwealth GAC. Minutes of meetings will be prepared by the CTO Secretariat and submitted to the Chair who will circulate to all members of the Group.
- v. Each member of the Group shall nominate a dedicated focal person whose contacts shall be sent to the CTO Secretariat, to streamline coordination of the group.