
ICANN78 | AGM – GAC Operational Matters (NomCom, Planning, Working Groups, etc)
Tuesday, October 24, 2023 – 10:00 to 11:00 HAM

GULTEN TEPE:

Recording in progress. Hello, and welcome to the ICANN 78 GAC operational matters session being held on Tuesday, 24th of October at 08:00 UTC. My name is Gulden Tepe. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN expected standards of behavior. During this session, questions or comments submitted in the chat will only be read aloud if put in the proper form. Interpretation for this session will include six UN languages and Portuguese. Please click on the interpretation icon in Zoom and select the language you will listen to during this session. If you wish to speak, please raise your hand in the Zoom room and once the session facilitator calls upon your name, kindly unmute your microphone and take the floor. Before speaking, ensure you have selected the language you will speak from the interpretation menu. Please state your name for the record and the language you will speak if speaking a language other than English. When speaking, be sure to mute all other devices and the notifications. Please speak clearly and at a reasonable pace to allow for accurate interpretation. To view the real-time transcription, click on the close caption button in the Zoom toolbar. To ensure transparency of participation in ICANN's multi-stakeholder model, we ask you to sign in to Zoom sessions using your full name. With that, I will hand the floor over to GAC Chair, Nicolas Caballero.

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NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you very much, Gulten. Welcome everyone again to our session number four, dealing with GAC operational matters. I'll give you a quick overview of the meeting. First, we'll have some reports from the working groups. Then we'll have a hopefully deep discussion on the issue of the NomCom, the Nominating Committee Relationship, and then we'll talk a little bit about strategic planning for and by the GAC. So please take your seats. Welcome again. And with that, I'll give the floor to Mr. Guo Feng from China. The floor is yours. Please go ahead.

GUO FENG: Thank you, Chair. Guo Feng from China for the record. Here is a report for the GAC operating principle working group. So as the co-chair, one of the co-chair of the GAC operating principle working group, I would like to thank all working group members for putting their efforts into the review on the GAC operating principle.

Well, at this point, I would like to briefly report to the GAC, the progress of the working group. So before this ICANN meeting on 28 September 2023 this year, the working group conducted a conference call. The aim of the working group call was to get momentum going and provide working group members with additional information in preparation for ICANN 78, the GAC meeting. So on that call, the co-chairs of the working group, me and Ian Sheldon from Australia, we proposed to extend the mandate of the working group, which was agreed by working group members. And the working group had also discussed a work plan for 2024 to 2025, exchanging views on how to make progress of this working group steadily and effectively. So the working group work plan

for the next two years was circulated yesterday in the GAC meeting list by Benedetta Rossi or ICANN support staff. So this concludes my quick updates. I'm looking forward to working with you in the working group. And now I hand over the mic to Ian.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you, China. Australia, please go ahead.

IAN SHELDON: Thank you, Nico. Ian Sheldon, GAC Australia, for the record. I think for those who may have heard the update last time, I'd like to reiterate, I think the GAC has a lot of critical work coming up, particularly as we approach the next round of gTLDs. The GAC operating principles document is a foundational piece of work that sets out a lot of those critical methods. I think there are still a lot of questions about how the GAC does its work, how it engages with other parts of the empowered community. And I'd very much like us to turn our minds to how we can use this document to better articulate the way in which we conduct our very important business. So please join the mailing list, join the working group and provide your thoughts on how we might be able to better prepare ourselves for the work ahead. Because I think we have a lot to do and the operating principles is foundational to that critical work. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you very much, Australia. Thank you again, China. Before I move on and give the floor to Pua Hunter from the underserved regions working group, any question for Australia and China regarding the

operating principle evolution working group? In the room or online, and I have India, please go ahead.

INDIA: Thank you, Chair. I would request Ian Sheldon to share the email ID so that the GAC representative can join it. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you, India. Australia?

IAN SHELDON: Perhaps GAC support might be able to circulate or recirculate the email address to all staff so we can—to all GAC, perhaps.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Perfect. Well noted. Thank you. For that, any other question, comment? If that is not the case, I'll give the floor to Pua Hunter, Chair of the underserved regions working group. Please go ahead, Pua.

PUA HUNTER: Thank you, Nico. Good morning, everyone. I'm going to provide some updates on the capacity development workshop that was held over the weekend. So, following the successful capacity development workshop held at ICANN 77 in Washington, D.C., and the consistent feedback from the post-workshop survey to continue the face-to-face workshop, the capacity development workshop planning team met frequently online to plan the ICANN 78 workshop that was completed over the weekend here in Hamburg. And from the post-workshop survey, GAC members

highlighted the value of face-to-face interaction because it provides a platform for participants to be introduced to GAC colleagues, topic leads, and also to expert panelists from ICANN Org staff and other community groups. The high turnover of GAC members—I think there's 105 new participants since the end of ICANN 74—in my view, demands for the capacity development workshop to be on the GAC's agenda during all ICANN meetings.

The purpose of the capacity development workshop is to provide GAC members, both veteran and new, the opportunity to learn, to relearn, or to refresh their understanding about the GAC, about ICANN, and about how GAC delivers on its operating procedures that are set out in the GAC's operating principles, and how the GAC interacts with other communities and stakeholders within ICANN in support of ICANN's multi-stakeholder model. The idea is to increase participation of GAC members, especially those of us GAC members from the underserved regions, to actively participate and engage with ICANN's policy processes and cross-community activities that are important to the GAC.

So over the two days, the workshop was split into a Foundation Policy Day and a Technology Day. The Foundation Policy Day covered an overview of the GAC and ICANN org, discussions on DNS abuse, the next round of new gTLDs, and applicant support program. And also, there was an introduction to the high-level governmental meeting that will be held in Rwanda during ICANN 80. Thank you, Charles [inaudible]. And also, on the first day, we ended with a breakout session. This was an opportunity to share and discuss regional priorities.

The second day, the Technology Day, covered in detail an introduction to the domain name system, alternate namespaces, blockchain, and naming systems. Also covered an overview of the stability and security of the domain name system and trademark issues. And again, the second day ended with a breakout session to discuss alternate namespaces and emerging technology that impacts the domain name system.

The recording, the Zoom video, the audio recordings of the workshops are available online in ICANN's UN languages. And the presentations and supporting documents will be available on the GAC website. The links are provided in Tracy Hackshaw's email to the GAC mailing list yesterday. And as you are used to by now, we will be sending out a post-workshop survey, and we would like your frank feedback, please, to assist us to prepare and deliver future workshops that are tailored to your request. As co-chairs of the underserved regions working group, Karel Douglas from Trinidad and Tobago, I would like to extend our sincere appreciation to each of you here and those of you who joined us remotely for your active interaction over the two days of the workshop. We also learned from your interaction, so thank you so much. We want to thank all the knowledgeable panelists for according us your valuable time among your own busy schedules to join us, to educate us, to speak to us, to engage and interact with us, so that we can be comfortable and confident to participate in the work of the GAC. We are truly grateful. Karel and I would like to thank the Capacity Development Workshop Planning Team, the main lead, Tracy Hackshaw. Thank you so much, Tracy. Susan Chalmers, Owen Fletcher, Alisa Heaver, Rudy Nolde, Ken Ying, and the amazing GAC support team, Rob, Daniel, GULTen, Julia,

Fabien, and Benedetta. And also the busy ICANN Org Team, [inaudible], Adiel, Paul, and David. Thank you all so much. Special acknowledgment to those who are visible but who are critical to the successful delivery of the workshop, our tech team, and our interpreters who made sure the workshop is inclusive for the many of us whose English is not our first or main language. I wish I knew your names, both the tech team and our interpreters. Last but not least, a big thank you, Nico, our GAC Chair, and the leadership team, Ola, Francis, [inaudible], Nigel, and Wang Lang, for maintaining support from previous GAC Chairs and Vice Chairs through recognizing the value of the GAC's capacity development workshop and supporting the underserved regions working group to ensure the logistical arrangements and resourcing are made available to us so that the workshops are delivered successfully. Thank you all so much.

NICOLAS CABALLERO:

Thank you. Thank you, Pua. Thank you to the fantastic team that developed the capacity building workshop. As a matter of fact, we'll talk about that a little bit later. But in the meantime, I just want to make sure that any distinguished GAC colleague can approach any of the members of the underserved regions working group and suggest any good idea you might have regarding the Capacity Development Workshop in terms of the topics to include for future workshops. And also for additional ideas for the Technology Day. I don't know, maybe we should find some sexy name for future sessions. But I don't want to get ahead of myself, so thank you again. Thank you again, Pua. Let's move on to the second topic, which is the nominating committee relationship. And for that, I will pass it on to Rob, right?

ROB HOGGARTH: Yes. Thank you, Chair. Rob Hoggarth for the record.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. US. US. Go ahead. I didn't see your hand on the...

LAUREEN KAPIN: I was hoping, time permitting, that the Public Safety Working Group might give a brief update. If that's okay, I'll keep it brief. This is Lauren Kapin, one of the co-chairs of the Public Safety Working Group. And we've been continuing our teamwork on trying to advocate for policies that keep the public safe. As folks know, we focus our attention on mitigating DNS abuse and also discussing ways for effective access to domain name registration data in a way that balances the interests between law enforcement, cybersecurity researchers, and also privacy interests of the registrants. Some of our recent work has been in the implementation review team for phase one, which we'll be talking about further in the upcoming sessions, particularly with regard to the status of urgent requests. And we've also been participating in the Registration Data Request Service, RDRS, or I'm told redress is the new way to pronounce that. That's easy to remember. We'll be talking about that further today, this afternoon, so stay tuned. So I did just want to alert folks that your Public Safety Working Group continues to work on behalf of the public interest on matters that are so important to the GAC.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you so much, Laureen. Thank you so much to the U.S. Well noted. Certainly, we know you're doing what you're doing. Thank you so much for that. Next time, I'll make sure we allocate enough time for your report. Sorry, I didn't see your hand. Rob, please go ahead.

ROB HOGGARTH: Thank you. And for purposes of working group reports, there's an opportunity for working groups to share information before every meeting. And I believe the HRIL working group as well has reported to you, but we'll also be sharing an update on their activities with the whole committee. Thank you.

So the next topic is one that came into fruition over the course of the summer. Earlier in the year, the board chair reached out to the GAC chair to ask for feedback on a fairly discreet topic related to rebalancing of the nominating committee. What that prompted was some conversations within the GAC leadership, which then prompted further conversations with some of you about how the GAC might respond to that. There was a pause and there was a realization that it was important for the committee to explore perhaps some of the more fundamental aspects of the GAC's relationship with the NomCom before more sophisticated conversations about rebalancing or other aspects of the relationship took place. And so with thanks to Finn here in the front row, there was a decision to add this topic to the agenda for this meeting to give you an opportunity, particularly many of you who are new, to understand a little bit more about the relationship between this committee and the nominating committee and to explore how it might look in the future. This is something that's relatively discreet to

the committee, and I observe that in the back of the room there are very few observers. So this will be the last opportunity for an intimate discussion among all of you before many more guests join us. So I'm hopeful that you'll have some input into this conversation.

The background, if you will, of the nominating committee is that the group exists as an independent body to provide recommendations to the community and to make nominations to a variety of community groups. They will recommend nominations and individuals to lead not only the board and to participate there, but to also provide leaders to join other parts of the ICANN community, the GNSO, the ASO, other types of groups. So it's important as a body to essentially help the organization identify people perhaps who are not within the community, but can provide some fresh perspectives or some objective views about what's going on in the community.

Now, the ICANN bylaws reserve a spot for the GAC on the nominating committee, but that position has gone vacant for many years, and that's primarily because as a committee you all have not reached consensus as to whether there should be a role or an individual who serves on the committee. That's been something that's been discussed for a substantial period of time. The most active period that I saw from my research prior to me joining was back in the 2014-2015 to 2018 period, where at one point there was actually a working group that was formed to examine this and to give consideration, noting that there were different views within the GAC. And one of your group, Manal, is going to help us understand some of those distinctions here in a bit, and thank you for that, Manal.

So the next slide certainly shows a few of those discussions, at least in terms of some touch points, the formation of the working group, the views that some had that it was important for the GAC to participate, the concerns that others had in terms of what the nominating committee confidentiality or secrecy sort of considerations were, and how that would impact participation from an individual from governments who might participate. So a number of different views were expressed. The bottom line was that the working group determined that the committee should not nominate anyone for the nominating committee or appoint anyone to serve, and as an alternative to produce a document on an annual basis to essentially share advice with the nominating committee. The concept of the information sharing was simply to provide guidance to the nominating committee from governments as to the various skills or capabilities that someone would need to have for the position.

The next slide brings us to why this discussion and why now in this time period, essentially prompting from not only the board's request, but an overall review of the implementation of changes to the nominating committee, how it could be brought into the current form of the ICANN organization, various improvements for how it could be broadened in terms of its fit for purpose, were all considered in the review process. And the culmination of the review process has now been an implementation plan, which includes aspects of rebalancing, which includes changes in terms of how the participants will engage within the nominating committee, including an expectation that the seat reserved for the GAC would become a voting seat as opposed to a non-voting seat. And so these recent requests to the committee have

prompted some conversations on the leadership team to essentially say, let's have the committee members discuss this, perhaps explore if changes in circumstances since the 2018 timeframe merit a change in the approach that the committee takes to the NomCom.

So that brings us to the issue today, which is really an opportunity for all of you to explore some of those past rationales for either participating or not, have a fresh discussion to determine whether there should be any change in the posture or whether the committee should continue to deploy the annual advice to the NomCom. And with that, that's sort of an overview, Mr. Chair. As I indicated earlier, Manal had offered in a pre-conversation, we had to provide a little bit of perspective, and that would be most welcome, Manal, if you could do that. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Egypt, go ahead, please.

MANAL ISMAIL: Thank you very much, Rob and Nico, and if it would be helpful to provide some more details on the background and why there was no consensus within the GAC on how to proceed. So at the time we had two different points of view. Some colleagues felt that this is a very important committee that selects leadership positions within ICANN and that the government's perspective should be taken into consideration when selecting such important positions within ICANN.

Others were of the view that given the confidentiality of the process, as a government, one cannot delegate another government to take

decisions on their behalf without even knowing the process, who was selected, how, who were the candidates, and so on. And it's fully understandable why the process is confidential, of course, to make sure we get good candidates for the positions. But again, this was the debate at the time, importance of participation versus concerns regarding the confidentiality of the process and that governments here are delegating just one person or another government to take decisions on their behalf. And at the time, as Rob mentioned, this was a non-voting seat, and we ended up providing criteria agreed upon by the GAC annually whenever the process indicated. So just to make sure colleagues here are clear about the two different views so that they can take an informed decision. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you so very much, Egypt, for that clarification. Iran, sorry to keep you waiting. Please go ahead.

KAVOUSS ARASTEH: Thank you, Chair. I think there is a difficulty of understanding. First, we have to go step by step. Observer. Observer does not have any right except one single expression of views at the meeting or even without that, but just observing. So I don't understand one government deciding for other government. Observer does not decide. I have been observing in some other meeting of the other organization. I don't decide. I just listen and then inform my authorities what I have listened. So I don't understand that one government deciding on behalf of others. For the time being, the observer does not decide.

Second, confidentiality. Why any individual could be understood to keep the confidentiality, but a representative of the government is doubtful that does not keep confidentiality. I don't understand this process. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you, Iran. I have Portugal and then Denmark. Portugal, please.

PORTUGAL: Thank you. I think that this situation is not ideal for GAC because the representative was the GAC chair and the status of observer. Since it has the possibility of being an observer, it may then discuss at GAC about that process. I think that perhaps it is not related to what has been said that a representative from GAC should have a say at the NomCom. The NomCom selects people for important positions, and perhaps some criteria should be sent for candidates to be elected.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Denmark and then the United Kingdom. Denmark, please. Thank you,

FINN PETERSEN: Thank you to Rob for this presentation and historical view of what has happened and Manal's addition to that, which is very helpful. From the outset, we think that actually giving written contribution of criteria which should be taken into account, we have found that very helpful from our side that was discussed here, and we agree on the criteria what should be taken into account. We can of course always revise them and see whether there should be additional criteria. For our point of view, I

think the fundamental thing is still the same. It's still not revealed, and it shouldn't be revealed what is discussed and who are the candidates and so on. And so we think it's not right for us to vote on or appoint all the governments on our behalf to be in there. They might speak. We don't know about that. They could observe, but if they are only observing and cannot give any report back, then we have difficulties to see the value added in having one in that. So the fundamental thing with secrecy and information cannot be shared. We don't know what our delegate will say, the transparency. We are still of the opinion that the GAC should not be in there. That's the one thing.

The second thing is that we actually, as government, do not think it's appropriate for us to be, government to be involved in who are sitting in the board and who are participating in GNSO. We might appoint one if we have the voting capacity, and we think it's right that we are advisors to the GAC community. I know that in power community, we have certain powers if necessary, but we don't think that GAC should expand its powers to be able to select board members or any other members of the ICANN community. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you very much, Denmark. I have the UPU. Then I have Iran, the UK, Hungary, and Switzerland. So UPU. Go ahead, please.

UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION: Thank you very much, Nico. So I have a little bit of context I could add to this. When I had left the GAC a few years ago, I joined the At-Large Advisory Committee, and I was nominated to sit on the NomCom from

the At-Large Advisory Committee representing the Latin American Caribbean. So just to give some colors to how it works in the NomCom without violating any confidentiality, the individual in the NomCom actually operates on their own. They speak in their own, based on their own expertise. They don't, or they're not supposed to, represent the views of a collective. Now I know the GAC may have a different view on that, but that's how it actually operates at a NomCom. You're essentially asked to evaluate the candidates based on your expertise as an individual. So there's never been a situation where they've asked you to go back to your group and find out what you think about candidate A or B or C, and obviously that would be confidentiality breaching. But as I said, the issue here is really you are represented in your own individuality. So I think that's important to take into consideration. That's how it actually works as opposed to representing the views of a collective. Thanks.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you so much, UPU. Thank you for the clarification. I have Iran, and then the UK, Hungary, Switzerland, and Portugal.

NIGEL HICKSON: Thank you very much, Nico, Nigel Hickson, UK. Thank you, Rob, for this debate. So I think it's a very important debate. It's a debate of practicality. It's a debate of principles. It's a debate of what we stand for as governments. And thanks to Manal for a bit of context in terms of the history of this.

I must admit, my own view is rather between the two camps or between the two. And I fully concur with what Tracy said in that my own assumption and my knowledge of what the NomCom does, not through ever serving on it, but obviously having an understanding of it from my days in ICANN. And yes, the individuals are individuals. They act based on their expertise and their experience. As we do in our own capacities, in our own organizations, when we interview candidates for jobs, when we're asked to go on an interview panel in our different professional capacities, we don't take the baggage of our organization with us. We act in our own judgment. We act given our own experience, given our own knowledge or whatever. And indeed, there's many other occasions in ICANN, I think, where we have to do that. Our esteemed chair sits on the ICANN board. That ICANN board will, in due course, have discussions of a confidential nature concerning the future CEO. What more could be important of that? Nico is not going to come back to us and say, by the way, the shortlist comprises of Fred, Jenny, Fiona and Rod. Rod? That's not a very... That wasn't a fraudulent slip. So, you know, Nico, as our esteemed chair, will be part of... Well, he may or may not be part of that discussion. But if he was, we would expect him to use his professional judgment as an experience, etc. We wouldn't expect him to represent our views, but to use his own experience as our chair. And I think in the same way, if one of us was to serve on the nominating committee, we would do likewise. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO:

Thank you very much, UK. I have Hungary. Peter, go ahead, please.

PETER MAJOR:

Thank you, Nico. And thank you, Rob. And thank you, Manal, for the clarifications. Well, I'm a bit confused now, having heard very convincing arguments. I tend to agree with Denmark, and especially in view of... There is a possibility of having a voting right in the NomCom. So the GAC has, in my view, some special positions. We are representing governments, and we are acting according to instructions. Now, all of a sudden, I can't see any of us participating on its individual capacity in a committee like NomCom. And the other part is the confidentiality. So if we participate either as observer or non-voting or voting member, there is no possibility of reporting back, except for the procedure itself. So I can't really see what are the pluses for all participations. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO:

Thank you, Hungary. Switzerland.

JORGE CANCIO:

Thank you, Nico. Jorge Cancio, Switzerland, for the record. I think it's important to look at this before we go into the details, that we look at this at the principles level. And at least for me, and I've been living through some transformations here in ICANN and with the role of the GAC, this situation has changed. Let's say in the very beginning, when this seat was allotted to the GAC in the 2000s, the GAC was that committee that met behind closed doors, that didn't really interact with the rest of the community, that only had a very special advisory role towards the board. And nowadays, we have a completely different role. So we still maintain that GAC consensus advise special role according to the bylaws. But we participate in the PDPs of the community, be it individually or sometimes with designated representatives from the

GAC. We participate in cross-community working groups. We've participated actively in the transition work, in the accountability work. We are part of the empowered community, where we take fundamental decisions together with the rest of the community, amongst other things about the possibility of taking down, recalling the entire board or individual board members. So we have that power or we participate in that power. And in the end, at a principles level, the input from the GAC and from the governments is just another part of the multistakeholder model we have in ICANN. So I think if we take that into account, this might change our view of things. So maybe we have to adapt to the new times we have nowadays. And there is also some sort of precedent, because after all, you, Nico, you are bound by confidentiality of what you discuss in the board. Of course, then there are decisions, there are some minutes, but really the discussion is confidential. I know this very well, because I had Thomas Schneider as chair in the board, and he couldn't and he couldn't and wouldn't tell what was discussed in the board. So this is already the case, and those are the biggest decisions, really, what you are taking in the board. And the government voice is there, is welcome. You don't vote. But as we heard in the opening and in the discussions, it's all about discussions. It's not about voting. It's about arguments. And I think it's important that in this multistakeholder way of doing things, the government voice or a government voice that is trusted, and maybe this is the biggest point here, is that that person in the board is trusted by the whole GAC. We trust you, Nico, as we trusted Manal, as we trusted Thomas in the past, to really exercise your professional judgment, which is a government point of view, after all. So I think if we take all that into account, maybe we should be rethinking our participation in the

NomCom, and basically also what Nigel said, I agree completely. And then we could, of course, set special conditions from the GAC side and make determinations on how we imagine that role being fulfilled. But I think we need it, or we need at least this first principles level discussion. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you very much, Switzerland. I have Portugal, and then Iran, and then Egypt. Portugal, please go ahead.

PORTUGAL: Thank you very much. What I try to say now is that the GAC is part of the ICANN community. In ICANN, in the various groups, and this is how we understand it, we understand the GAC should not be removed from some bodies or instances, as in this case, the discussions about the participation of GAC with the NomCom. We have a chair who was elected by all of us, and this chair represents us before the board. And if he's representing us before the board, why can't he represent us before the NomCom, according to the provided rules? We have to be admitted as part of the community, and I do not think that that is the right situation. We have to talk to the community. We have to interact with the community. We have to provide our views in the community and participate in the various bodies, even as observers. And we have to be better positioned as a GAC within the ICANN family. We have to be present in the community. And in this regard, I don't know if we are finding the best way to do that in this meeting, so we must be part of the GAC and be present in all ICANN bodies as much as possible, as we are a group of governments, of government representatives who are

represented by the chair and by the various observers. And this is what I wanted to say. Thank you very much.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Iran, go ahead, please.

KAVOUSS ARASTEH: Thank you very much, Chair, Delegate of Switzerland and Delegate of Portugal. Portugal put their finger on a very important point. I put a little bit further than that. In an empowered community, who participates on behalf of GAC? Someone and generally the Chair. So we have full confidence on that. So there is no one government representing other governments. In the nomination of the ICANN panel for the board panel for the IRP, there are five members from the ICANN, from the GAC, three members, and you have confidence on them in many other areas. So I think that there is no point that there is no confidence on government on behalf of other governments. In [ICG,] in accountability also, we communicate the views of the GAC to the other community. So I think that that is not any question anymore that there is no confidence. I suggest, Chair, that we start the process of participating as an observer as a first step and nominating someone to participate on that. And later on, after the sufficient results and sufficient reflection, we could decide that whether or not we're going further to have a full participant rather than the observer. So I think that confidence is not an issue. We have confidence on any delegates. And in particular, if it is the Chair, we have full confidence, as Portugal mentioned, elected by everybody and so on and so forth. So I think that

we should proceed step by step at the participation and as a first step as an observer. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you very much, Iran. I have Egypt. Manal, go ahead, please.

MANAL ISMAIL: Thank you, Nico. I'm just trying to make sure to distinguish two things because I felt from the discussion that people are conflating maybe two things. First, there is difference between observing and non-voting. So as a non-voting, you don't get to vote at the end, but you participate throughout the discussions and you influence the decision. So this is one thing. The other thing, comparing the Chair situation with other things, again, the Chair is the only person who does not participate in their national capacity. But other members of the GAC, of course, they do participate in their national capacities. So just two points to make sure that we are on the same page and, again, take an informed decision. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you for that, Egypt. Certainly, I don't represent Paraguay. I don't speak on behalf of Paraguay. I speak on behalf of the Full GAC, 182 members and 38 IGOs. So that's certainly the case. Thank you, Egypt. I have Brazil.

LUCIANO MAZZA DE ANDRADE: Thank you, Nico. Luciano here for the record. Just following up on comments made by other colleagues, I think yes, I think your role is

institutional. And I think, in principle, it makes sense that the GAC's Chair participate in the committee according to the rules that are in place. So as Manal clarified, this is an observer, but in fact would participate normally only without voting. The thing I think it's important to consider is how to reconcile this with the notion that the GAC presents criteria to the committee to take into consideration. Because then if the Chair is attending this committee on an institutional capacity, we cannot abstract from the fact that the GAC has presented criteria to be taken into consideration. So I think that's where you have to think a little bit how to make sure yourself or the Chair that is on the occasion is in a comfortable position. Because at least I think that the Chair would be expected to take into consideration the criteria that the GAC has submitted. So I think that's the balance you have to strike here. And again, you would be participating in a personal capacity to a certain extent, but an institutional capacity to another extent. And then it would be important to see how we can make sure this is reconciled. But in principle, we see it as making sense to have this place filled by the GAC's Chair in its institutional capacity. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you, Brazil. And I have Egypt. Go ahead, Egypt.

MANAL ISMAIL: I'm very sorry. One last thing and sorry to continue to play the devil advocate even to my own ... Because I think that the idea of having the Chair in that position, it's making sense to me. But now thinking about it from a practical point of view, the process, and I stand to be corrected, of course, by those who are more experts in the NomCom process. I

know they meet face to face around the same time in a very separate and isolated place. So I don't think the GAC Chair could do both at the same time being at the NomCom in this very confidential setup and running the GAC and attending the board. So again, it's from a practical point of view, it might not be feasible. But thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you very much, Egypt. I totally agree with you. I wouldn't be willing to go to Antarctica to have meetings there, you know, and some other clashing, potentially clashing. All right, sorry, sorry. I have the UK. UK, go ahead, please.

NIGEL HICKSON: Yes, thank you, Nico. Nigel Hickson. I mean, yes. I mean, just to confirm that point, it's absolutely right. I mean, the chair would be ideal on the NomCom, but it would be impossible in relation to the way the NomCom is structured and in relation to the way they operate on a confidential basis in a hotel or whatever that's separate from the conference room during many of the GAC meetings. But I don't think that necessarily precludes someone else representing the GAC. But of course, that is a different question as well. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Any other comment? Any other question? We're running out of time. We only have three more minutes, according to my ... Iran, go ahead, please.

KAVOUSS ARASTEH: Thank you very much. I think you have to decide to participate. And that is the issue. That who participate, that is another issue. There is a difference between confidentiality and the appropriateness confidentiality. We have no difficulty at all with the chair. But as mentioned by the other people, maybe you may not be possible or the chair may not be possible to attend. That is another issue. The step is that to participate and we have to decide on participation, whether first step as observer and then as a non-voting or non-voting from the very beginning. So all of these to think separately, but not mixing them up. So participation is issue on the table, but not the person. The person we decide at the later stage. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you, Iran. And you actually read my mind. By the way, there's another thing. We have five vice chairs. So whatever decision, if we decide to participate or not or whatever the outcome is, in any case, we still have five vice chairs in case the chair is not able to participate for whatever clashing agendas or whatever. But we're running out of time. Rob, please go ahead.

ROB HOGGARTH: Thank you, Chair. Rob Hoggarth. I just want to thank you all very much for the conversation and the exchange of views. That was the purpose of this session. It still begs the question as to what the decision is and how you all sort of work to achieve that. But I think for the first time in six years, it's an opportunity and was very helpful to hear the views. I don't know what your view is as chair or any members of the committee in terms of what you would do to take this to the next step. Kavouss did

a great job of sort of outlining some of the various points. The final one that was in my introductory remarks that I did not share was because the committee has not used the seat for many years, there have been many occasions in which others say, well, we would like it. What are you doing with it? As part of the review is, well, if the GAC's not using it, it could certainly be used by another group. So something to factor into future conversations. But again, noting that the goal was not to make a decision today, we will, as staff, confer with the chair, vice chair team to see what's to be done next. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO:

Thank you very much, Rob. So we can discuss about—This is certainly a topic for our next call. So with that, again, thank you very much. We've run out of time. We're going to take a 30 minute break. Please be back at 11:30 sharp. Thank you so much.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]