
ICANN84 | AGM – Joint Meeting: GAC and ALAC
Tuesday, October 28, 2025 – 9:00 to 10:00 IST

GULTEN TEPE

Welcome to the GAC meeting with the ALAC on Tuesday, 28th of October at 9:00 UTC. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior, ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct, and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy. During this session, questions or comments will be read aloud if submitted in the proper form in the Zoom chat pod. Interpretation for this session will include all six UN languages and Portuguese.

If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in the Zoom room. And please remember to state your name for the record and the language you will be speaking in case speaking a language other than English. And please speak at a reasonable pace to allow for accurate interpretation. With that, I'll now hand the floor over to GAC Chair, Nicolas Caballero. Over to you, Nico.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you very much, Gulten. Good morning, good afternoon, good evening, everyone. I hope you had a good opportunity last night to visit this beautiful city of Dublin. There were a couple of dinner parties and some receptions as well last night, and I saw many of you over there, so I really hope you enjoyed that time

Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

there. So, I have the pleasure of introducing, you know, our colleagues from the ALAC.

We have Avri Doria to my right, Justin Chew, Justin Chew, and Jonathan Zuck, of course, and my vice chair from Switzerland, you know, Jorge Cancio, Martina Barbero from the European Commission, Tracy Hackshaw from the UPU. We have Manal Ismail, who needs no introduction at this point. She was the best ever GAC Chair in history, and I hope she will try to make it again sometime soon. And Kristina Hakobyan.

So, welcome, everyone. This session will be divided into three main topics, the first one being DNS Abuse, and we'll allocate some good time, you know, to have a substantive discussion in that regard, Review of Reviews, of course, and the ASP, the Applicant Support Program for the DNS Abuse topic.

On behalf of the GAC, we will have, you know, my distinguished colleague Martina Barbero here, and for RORs, the speaker will be Manal, and for the ASP, we will have, you know, our colleague, Tracy. And Jonathan, I assume you will do the introductions for the ALAC in this regard. So, without further ado, let's get started. I'll pass it over to you, Jonathan. Please go ahead. And welcome again, everyone.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Yes, and thank you for having us. We always enjoy our visit to the interrogation room here with the Clegg light on us, and always

somehow just automatically feel guilty every time we sit down at this table. But we really enjoy our collaboration with the GAC because we have so much in common in terms of the stakeholders that we represent. We're really both focused on the plight and challenges of end-users, and we've had a lot of, I think, very successful partnerships in our advocacy within the ICANN community.

And these meetings are always good to plant the seed, but a lot of the work gets done by folks in between the meetings, and I'm sure this will be no different, but we really appreciate you inviting us and making us part of your conversation. The first part of the discussion on this side is about DNS Abuse and what's going on with the contract amendments and with the upcoming policy PDPs, policy development processes, that are being proposed after the issue report, and so there does seem to be some movement. And so, without further ado, I think I will pass the microphone to Justine Chew to tell us a little bit about what's going on over there in the GNSO.

JUSTINE CHEW

Thanks, Jonathan. And if I may, before I start, I'd like to raise any other business items. So, if we, Nicole, if we can have like three minutes or something towards the end. Thank you. Right. So, I mean, in terms of the topic that was given to us, or that we agreed to speak in terms of DNS Abuse enforcement trends. So, if you're

talking about enforcement trends and transparency, we're looking mostly at the ICANN contractual compliance side.

And we've had periodic reports from contractual compliance, not just to GNSO, but also to the community. I think blogs that they put out, webinars that they conduct periodically. So the latest report, I believe it was something like not too long ago. Maybe last week, sometime in October, at least. And they have put out this report that says things like, well, that states things like they believe that the 2024 contractual amendments on DNS Abuse obligations, appear to be working quite well.

It supports their multifaceted approach in either looking at complaint-driven incidences or through their audit-related work. And they've actually put in numbers such as nearly 20,000 malicious domain names have been mitigated for a certain period. But the thing is, what they're doing is still focused on the remediation side of things. So, they focus on remediation plans, which is curative. So, all these are curative. They're not really preventive in that sense that if you stop a DNS Abuse from even start, you know, even happening. That is a good thing as well.

So far, all these contractual amendments have been focused on prevent, sorry, curative measures. But the one thing that we still kind of ask is the thresholds that they use, the contractual compliance used to take any form of enforcement action, whether it's a warning or a breach notice and that sort of thing. They have their process, but they have certain discretion as to when to trigger

something or other. So, we don't really have full transparency on those kinds of thresholds.

And as Jonathan said, we, in terms of where we are landing now, the ALAC and the At-Large, we are more focusing our energies towards preventive measures, which is where the GNSO PDPs come in. So, we're actively participating in that side of things. And I also like to note that, you know, at the GNSO DNS Abuse session that was held this week, we had your GAC, Topic Lead colleagues, as well as from the Public Safety Working Group in attendance.

And I would like to ask for the possibility of doing intersessional work, collaborative work with, between your Topic Leads and our Topic Leads on DNS Abuse. So, hopefully that we can work on something for that. Thanks.

JONATHAN ZUCK

I'll just briefly add that in discussions with contract compliance, even they are looking forward to these preventative measures being in place, because despite the requirements placed on the registrars through the amendments, a lot of the DNS Abuse happens so quickly that most of the damage is done before any of the mitigation can take place.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you, Justine. Thank you, Jonathan. I'll pass it over to Martina Barbero from the European Commission now. Martina, please go ahead.

MARTINA BARBERO

Thank you very much, Nico. And just, I'll take the risk on the behalf of my fellow DNS Abuse Co-Topic Leads to accept the invitation to work together intersessionally on this topic. I hope that that is going to be fine for my colleagues from Japan and the US who also work on DNS Abuse as Topic Leads for the GAC.

So, I will be quite brief because I think Justine covered already the basis of what's going on and what compliance is doing with the data on enforcement of the contract amendments. But just to say that for the GAC, the topic of enforcement of the contract amendments and the transparency of reporting have been quite high on the agenda since at least the contract amendment negotiations.

I will split my presentation in two parts, and I will speak slower for the interpreter. So, on the enforcement trend, just to say that the GAC appreciates compliance, putting out the data on a regular basis. I think it's very relevant and important that we have a full picture and a monthly report of how the enforcement is being carried out.

We have had discussion with ICANN compliance where they have drawn our attention to the limitations of the data. For instance, there are instances of double reporting of the same abuse, or sometimes the data is of poor quality, so we cannot consider the

data as the ultimate source in terms of the wisdom that we would expect. But the data is important and useful.

What we have discussed with the colleagues from compliance is that what would be maybe useful would be to have the data in a machine-readable format, because at the moment, the way it is reported is without any possibility to download the data and merge these datasets with other datasets. So, this is just a suggestion.

And in general, we have discussed about the readability of the data because the main shortcoming that we see with the way it is reported right now is that it's difficult to interpret. To give an example, from other sources, we know that there are abuse spikes close to festivities, like Christmas, because there is more phishing. And this is difficult to see and interpret from the data of ICANN compliance.

So this is something that maybe can be worked on, but otherwise we appreciate the possibility to see how the amendments are enforced and work with compliance on understanding the trends. And on transparency, I think this is a very, very important topic for the GAC that was already brought up in the Public Comment to the contract amendments.

Transparency of reporting is something that the GAC indicated was very relevant and needed further work. At the time of the contract amendment, there were no modifications to the amendment themselves based on this input from the GAC.

Now, we have just referred to the upcoming policy development processes. There has been an issue paper, and the issue paper again, analyzes a number of gaps beyond those that will be for immediate PDPs. And amongst this gap, there's also transparency of reporting.

So, the GAC has picked up again on this topic and suggested that this is something that deserves further attention and maybe further work. Because overall, we believe that the more data we have from enforcement, the more visibility we have on the mitigation action from the contracted parties, the better we will know what remains to be done to address DNS Abuse, knowing that, as Justine said, things go very quickly and we need to work on some preventative measures. But in general, having sound evidence on how the current contracts are working and our contracted parties react, it's already a good basis for evidence-based policymaking. Thank you very much, Nico, back to you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you so much for that, Martina, European Commission. I couldn't agree more with you. And in this case, it would be good to reinforce somehow what you're mentioning about the data. Data is critical in this case. And as a matter of fact, it would be a very good idea to ask compliance to provide the data in readable formats, like CSV, for example, at a minimum.

And on the other hand, to open the data, so that data-driven decisions can be made in order to allocate energy and to focus on

the areas where the problems are actually identified. So, let me stop here in order to see if we have questions or comments from the online participants or the distinguished colleagues in the room. And I have a hand from India. Please go ahead, India. Thank you.

SUSHIL PAL

Thank you, Nico. We heard that one of the problems in actually getting the data is because the data is not standardized. Can we request ICANN compliance to standardize the data format for the DNS Abuse reporting? That's one suggestion, because if that is there, then by a normal API, the whole data can be shared instantly.

And the other thing, I mean, as per the agreement, the contracted party agreement, we know that they have an obligation to take proactive steps for the DNS Abuse mitigation, which is kind of a very vague motherhood statement. I mean, it doesn't actually pinpoint as to what specific action they have to take.

I'm not sure if the registrar agreements or the contracted party agreement can make it mandatory for them to report all the DNS Abuse data in those, through that standardized format, as in when ICANN compliance makes it, because these are the two essential conditions for us to even, you know, have some semblance of the transparency portal, which we are all talking about. Otherwise, I mean, this will stay in the language, I think. If you're looking for, I'll repeat, if you're looking for any semblance of a transparency portal in any near future, two things are mandatory.

One is the standardized format for the DNS Abuse reporting, and second, making it mandatory, because only then you will have an evidence-based policymaking, and only then you will have a complete analysis and not a fragmented reporting from the registrars. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you so much, India. I don't know if you would like to reply anything to that, European Commission?

MARTINA BARBERO

Thank you very much for these remarks. I think it's very relevant. What maybe needs to be clarified is what compliance reports are not the data from the contracted parties, but they are their own data about how they enforce the contracts. And what we heard from compliance, so here I'm trying to speak on behalf of them, but what we heard from that means that the way they compile the data is not automatic, it's quite manual, hence why it is sometimes difficult for them to provide the data in a machine-readable format, interoperable format.

Nonetheless, this is something we can work on with them to try to get to a solution that makes the data more useful, but I don't think they will, they don't have the data from the registrar and registers themselves to share.

What they share is the data that ICANN Org and ICANN compliance has. So, this is to be kept into consideration. And then on

transparency of reporting, this is indeed something that, as I said, for the GAC is very important and we need to, we believe there is further work needed to ensure that there is more transparency on how the registrars and registries address DNS Abuse. But I don't think at the moment there is any, and here again to be checked with contractor compliance, any obligation for the registrar and registers to report in a particular format to ICANN.

SUSHIL PAL

Could you help us know that who will be actually making these data formats, standardized data formats for the DNS? Which body will it be? And secondly, I think, will making it mandatory reporting, it will only happen through the contracted parties' agreements?

MARTINA BARBERO

So, on who makes the data available at the moment is contract, on the format, I mean it's compliance that decides which format they want to put the data out for their own data at the moment. But for the registrar and registries, then of course this will need to be an obligation to them, and this is something that we raised in the GAC comment to the Public Comments.

SUSHIL PAL

Can the GAC and the ALAC make this request to the ICANN compliance for making their data a standardized data format? Is that okay?

MARTINA BARBERO

I think for compliance, yes, of course we can ask compliance to do it, but then this is just for the data that compliance holds. And then anything that is on the registrar's side, I'm afraid it will require policy development or contract amendments to be effective.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you for that, India. Thank you, European Commission. Indeed, access, I mean, in terms of transparency, having full access to, on the one hand, full access to the data, and on the other hand, open standards so that they're interoperable, so the data sets can actually be used and you can get some meaning out of the huge numbers you will have there. It totally makes sense.

Now, as Martina correctly pointed out, there are some legal issues underlying. I mean, I'm not a lawyer, right, but there's only, you know, ICANN compliance can only ask registries and registrars, you know, they can't force registries or registrars to produce, you know, the kinds of information or the standards that we need at this point. But I stand to be corrected.

Again, I'm not a lawyer, and it would make sense, you know, from a software engineering point of view to have automatic access on the spot to the maximum possible amount of data in open standards so that you can do whatever you want to do with those numbers. But very, very good question, indeed. Thank you, India, for that.

The floor is still open. Any other comment or question in this regard? USA, please go ahead.

SUSAN CHALMERS

Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to note that to your point, there is no current requirement to report on the abuse reports received by registries and registrars. Thanks.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you, USA. Any other comment? Jonathan, go ahead.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Putting on my hat from the CCT review from, I think, 600 years ago, I one of the more amorphous requirements in the contracted party contracts is a requirement to participate in economic studies. And I think that's something that's probably worthy of some more exploration and some greater specificity the next time we open those contracts, because I think that that's really the doorway to getting more information from the contracted parties.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you so much, Jonathan. So, I don't see any other hand online or in the room, so let's move on and we'll cover the topic of Review of Reviews. And for that, I'll pass the floor to Avri Doria and Jonathan again. Is it Avri or you? Avri, please go ahead. The floor is yours.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. The Review of Reviews, it's coming at it from basically two perspectives here. One is, of course, the At-Large perspective that has put me on there as one of their folks, and then also because I am participating as one of the co-chairs, so trying to keep the two perspectives different.

From one perspective, certainly from the At-Large perspective, there was a frustration with the reviews, a frustration that things like the structural review, the holistic review, and such did not happen. And there's a strong need felt within At-Large for there to be a structural review and growth go through that seriously.

As I say, there was a frustration in terms of the holistic, but there's an acceptance that the world moved on, and we now have the Review of Reviews, and we really need to do our best to make sure that in coming to that, we come out with something that works in terms of the reviews.

As one of the co-chairs there, I've actually been quite heartened, especially by the meeting we had yesterday. Before that, I was a little worried that we weren't going to get enough contribution, enough viewpoints coming from people, that people have started to talk, that people have started to tell us what they expect from a review, what the purposes of a review are.

And that's one thing where we find there's a large diversity of opinions on what's expected from a review, and we're just now

starting today, I think we have a meeting later today, to go through some of the comment we've got and figure out the next steps. So, I haven't quite synthesized it yet, but I was very pleased in noticing not only the number of comments we got, the number of different comments, but that we actually got some people that were saying, you know, at the moment you're looking at tinkering around and fixing what you've got, perhaps you need to take a step back.

Perhaps when you're looking at the purposes of the review, instead of talking about things like the Strategic Plan being a foundational document, that perhaps it's what you should be reviewing the progress on. And so, we're starting to get different perspectives, and in fact last night it sent me away to go and reread the Strategic Plan, never having been a great fan of strategic plans, and look at it and look at the work that they did, set it out perfectly as something that people could base a review on.

So, I really am sitting here in that position sort of saying keep participating, keep telling us what it is you need to see, what it is that the purpose of review is. If we don't have a solid view of the purposes, how will we create a set of reviews that actually satisfy what we need? I'd like to hear from Jonathan, who's a participant in this, more than this divided view that I seem to walk around with. Thanks.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Yes, I echo Avri's experience from yesterday, that I think we had a call during prep week and I came away from that feeling like we

might be on our own a little bit, and yet the meeting yesterday, there was a lot of very diverse input and a lot of almost out-of-the-box thinking, in fact, from members of the audience.

In fact, I want to say that it might have been, I'm not sure, it might have been Becky, but it doesn't matter, but one idea that sort of surfaced from yesterday was the idea that maybe part of the problem, or the challenge if you will, of some of the reviews in the past has been the fact that it's a fixed set of reviews on a fixed cadence, and that the reality might be that there should only be one review that's on a fixed cadence.

And that everything else is on an as-needed basis and scheduled for its own success, and that maybe our job isn't to put together the next list of reviews that need to happen on an established cadence, but instead put together a framework for generating reviews on an ad hoc basis going forward. So, I don't know that that's the answer, but that was something that came up yesterday that I thought was quite interesting.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you so much. Thank you so much, Avri, Jonathan, Manal, over to you.

MANAL ISMAIL

Thank you, Nico, and thanks, Avri and Jonathan. We had a quick discussion on reviews as well within the GAC, not a discussion but a quick overview, and GAC underscored the importance of ICANN

reviews and is very keen to see ICANN review system back on track to ensure that ICANN continues to effectively and efficiently fulfill its bylaws mandated mission commitments and core values, of course in a transparent, accountable and inclusive manner.

Worth noting that this also feeds into a GAC strategic objective one on government's role in ICANN, where we have agreed to add ICANN Review of Reviews to the GAC strategic objectives and to contribute to the community consultation group efforts in that respect in order to ensure ICANN compliance with any bylaws mandated reviews.

As you may already know, the GAC is represented on the group by Tracey Hackshaw of UPU, to my right, and myself, and also co-chairing the group, and thanks to ILAC for the nomination. As Avri mentioned and Jonathan, we had a good exchange yesterday. Frankly, it exceeded our expectations in terms of the input we received.

We haven't analyzed the input yet, but thanks to our support staff, they provided us with a super quick raw data. I can provide a quick food for thought for colleagues and maybe take any immediate reactions now, but I think it may inspire your thinking.

So, in terms of how we were doing on the purpose of reviews and whether we're heading in the right direction, we had like 60% saying that we're heading in the right direction, whereas 20 something or maybe 30% said it depends on more information is

needed. A couple of input said no, and I think we also need to focus on why not and what we can do to bring everyone on board.

On what is missing from our list of purposes, we had comments, and this is by no means exhaustive, of course. It's just quick examples of what we have received on how SO and AC processes are consistent with the ever-evolving governance and transparency, performance and execution speed of the Org, include all advices, not just the one from governments, clarify what components of ICANN means in the context of the much-needed structural review referenced, definition of the community, staff and their processes effectiveness.

And on the question of what are the things you think should be reviewed, we had also some interesting input. So, we had multi-stakeholder model, travel support allocations, inclusivity and openness of SOs and ACs and their stability, accountability, transparency, trust fit for purpose, whether the end result of the reviews caused genuine improvement, conflict of interest statements, relation between, interrelations between SOs, ACs, NC and the board, ICANN structure and sustainability of a volunteer-based community.

And on the very last question regarding what would make the review, a success. I believe they were all output oriented, so brings more change that is impactful. Recommendations are clear, logical, and implemented before the next review begins. Produces

outcomes that are actionable and measurable. Results in improvements.

Produces meaningful, actionable improvements. And takes a definite or limited time frame and there was a suggestion of a maximum of 18 months. And I leave it at this. If there are any immediate comments or feedback on the questions or the input we received yesterday, please feel free to raise your hands. And if not, please, as Avri mentioned, keep providing us with your input. And I'll hand it over to you, Nico, thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you so much for that, Egypt. Again, before I open the floor for comments or questions, Avri, Justine, Jonathan, is there anything you would like to add before the Q&A?

AVRI DORIA

Only the one thing in terms of making sure you show up for the Thursday meeting, which will be the next opportunity to contribute to it.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you, Avri. So, the floor is open. Comments, questions? And I see a hand over there. Yes, please, go ahead. Sebastien. Oui, merci beaucoup.

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET

Thank you very much, Sébastien Bachollet. Thank you. Thank you very much for your very complete report. I understand that the co-chair and the participants to the Working Group should be happy about yesterday's session, so am I. I just wanted to underline, perhaps, something that I believe is essential. I'm just afraid that right now, it's the people in the know who can take part in this, those people who already have a long experience in ICANN, in the review process. I'm just afraid that those are the only people who understand what's happening.

And I want to make sure that both on the level of At-Large, that at the level of the GAC or ICANN, we have everybody on board. Now, there are people like me who know just about everything. Yes, it's absolutely essential that we can think about the future. But I think those who really need to think about the future are the younger ones, the ones who just arrived.

And I'm not quite sure that we've done everything that needs to be done in this endeavor. This is really a discussion between people in the know. It's not that we don't want to open up the discussion, but it's just that people don't have the necessary knowledge. What do we need to do? I don't know. I don't have the solution. But I think we could have, perhaps, webinars, training seminars, explanation seminars. It would be very, very useful. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Avri, Jonathan, Justine, anything? Would you like to...

AVRI DORIA

Certainly. Sebastien, thank you very much for that one. And I think you're absolutely right. I know as an individual, I certainly have made myself willing to talk about it to any newcomer anytime and have tried to tell newcomers, especially how important they are, because they come and they look at it with a light.

And also, we call them reviews, but they're really about the future. In other words, while we're reviewing what happened in the past, we're not reviewing it just so we have a statement about the past having been good or bad, but because we know how to move into the future. And of course, the future does belong to newcomers and not old people like me.

So, I think that that's good. I think you're right. How to organize more education is probably a good thing, especially over the next couple months while we're looking at the purposes and trying to decide what the next steps are, whether it's more webinars, whether it's something specific, I don't know. But I know that there's a whole group of people within ICANN that are constantly working on increasing the opportunities for capacity building within ICANN.

So, I think transferring that idea to them. And I think those of us that are working on it, that have been assigned to it, sort of have our own responsibility to sort of teach or explain whenever we can.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you so much for that, Avri. There's an old saying in Spanish that goes that if you don't know history, you're cursed to suffer it again. Well, something along those lines. I'm not very good.

TRACY HACKSHAW

Doomed to repeat it. It's in every language, I think.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Doomed to repeat it. Thank you, Tracy. So, thank you for that again. Any further feedback from my distinguished vice chairs at this point? If not, oh, I have a hand from, yeah, Switzerland. Go ahead.

JORGE CANCIO

Thank you, Nico. It's a bit far away, the microphone. Jorge Gancio, Switzerland, for the record. So, I think it's a good opportunity to use this meta review and this exercise to also consider, to zoom out a little bit and to reflect whether the many processes and the structures we have are serving to those very important goals of openness, inclusivity, accountability, transparency, and meaningful participation.

And I couldn't let this opportunity escape without saying that it would be a great opportunity also to see how we work in ICANN, how we work together fits in with standards or best practices like the Sao Paulo multistakeholder guidelines, which we could

consider in order to have also a fresher look on how we work together. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you very much, Switzerland. And I see support from the floor to your remarks. For the sake of time, we need to move on.

So, next slide, please, Gulten. We're going to be talking about the ASP, the Applicant Support Program now, the MEAD Program Assessment to be more precise. And for that, the speakers are going to be Avri Doria and Tracy Hackshaw from the UPU, and Avri Doria, of course, from the ALAC. Avri, over to you.

AVRI DORIA

Me first again, okay.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Avri, could you please speak a little bit closer to the microphone?

AVRI DORIA

A little bit closer, sure.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

A little bit closer, thank you.

AVRI DORIA

I need to get smaller in order to do that. Okay, so I come at this one again from several perspectives. One, in terms of applicant

support, ever since the last round, I have definitely been a strong supporter of us needing to do more and to, this time, be successful at it.

While there was one successful, I believe one successful applicant last time, we need more. As the initial part of this opened up, the clues on its success are worrisome. Perhaps, as we move towards the end, and I'm very grateful to ICANN for having given another month for people to complete their applications, it is worrisome.

There are very few from some regions, just a few from Latin America, Caribbean, just one from Africa. So, that is a worrisome sign that is probably not going to get better before the end as the period is approaching its end. And ICANN has spent a lot of effort and money on advertising it, but it hasn't necessarily taken the question we're going to have to answer is why.

In terms of this, I've also gone further. Not only have I sort of agitated for these for a long time and worked with the policy and the implementation review teams, this time I actually got myself involved and I'm working with an applicant for one. And it is an interesting experience.

And by the way, I recommend it to everybody at some point, actually get involved in doing one of these things because there's such a difference between being on the theoretical policy side of this and actually filling in one of the applications and actually being part of the process. And there's nothing wrong with the process, but it's hard. But it's really hard even for somebody that

understands or thinks she understands ICANN to understand the application process.

And so one of the things I think we should look for as we talk about a post-analysis on this, and still being optimistic, there are a couple months left, everybody may get their application submitted in the last month and everybody may have an acceptable application, but we'll see, is to actually spend time doing an analysis with the applicants about their impressions of it, how it worked, what worked for them, what was difficult for them. So, I think there's a lot.

So a lot has been done. ICANN should be complimented on the efforts it's made, but it seems that we may still be missing the mark on it. And that's going to be very important to get determined for yet another round as it comes, because we cannot continue to not reach all of the applicants that need support. So I'll stop there for the moment, thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you very much for that, Avri. At this point, let me give the floor to Tracy Hackshaw from the UPU.

TRACY HACKSHAW

Thank you very much, Avri, and thank you, Nico. I just want to probably say two things. One, I want to echo Columbia, Thiago's observation yesterday, where although we're talking about doing a post-mortem and moving on, let's ensure I think as Avri sort of

hinted at that we still double our efforts to get those who are in the pipeline through the system. So, there are quite a number of them in the pipeline, which is very helpful.

It'll be a terrible thing for that not to be squeezed out and have that through and still have a somewhat successful applicant support program, even though the signs don't look very positive right now. Let's turn it around, so I think that's the thinking that I want to share that Thiago raised yesterday. So, that's one.

And two, I want to highlight some points that were raised yesterday in another meeting with colleagues from the Commonwealth. And some of the things that came up, they were very interesting. And again, some of the issues that we think that the ICANN survey that was held with the prospective applicants might have either sort of surfaced or not surfaced, which are issues related to these financial issues that seem not to be resonating very well with anybody who is not in a country that is wealthy.

So in a country that is not wealthy, the 85% reduction is still very expensive. And the costs beyond that are still very expensive. And that is somehow not, I think, resonating extremely well within the community, that even though there's a major reduction, it's still an expensive program. And therefore, when prospective applicants in these countries look at it, it's a major, major investment, even with a major reduction in the retail or the market price, or the cost recovery price, as they say.

And even beyond that, as we discussed yesterday, it seems as if this program, and it comes to what Afri was sort of speaking to, there's something that's not clear or missing from what's happening in the overarching project. And it may very well be that we're talking to ourselves a lot, that we're talking to the community who understands the program, who understands the DNS, but we haven't gone beyond that very effectively.

The reason for that is not clear, meaning that we haven't, not saying we haven't tried to target them, is that the message hasn't reached them, or the message has not been impactful enough to reach them. And I think that's the issue that we're grappling with, that for a business case to be made for this next round, for people who are not in the current industry or understand the ICANN community, for those folks to understand what they need to do and to bring them on board, it seems to be a leap of faith. And that, I think, is a missing piece of the puzzle.

I'm just speculating what might happen next, but I think that is the next step that ICANN has to make. And it's not just related to the next round, but also other ICANN issues, in that bringing those folks into the ICANN community is a problem. So, we have sort of a stagnation of people who are getting involved in the ICANN world.

You can see it amongst us, the same people we see at meetings every time we come to meetings. And we don't see it sort of diversifying, growing, expanding into a larger pool of people. And therefore, I think that is one of the issues that ICANN needs to look

at themselves. And we need to help, as the GAC, to sort of broaden that scope.

And I think that the thinking here is that we need to really go above and beyond what we are doing today and stop talking to ourselves, if you see what I'm trying to say, and talk to everyone else in a different, maybe a different language, a more down-to-earth language, less acronyms, less technical, more about what we can do in terms of digital economies, in terms of the internet itself, and look at what we, as the GAC, can do to help broaden and deepen the industry, sector/industry, going forward. Thank you very much.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you so much for that, UPU, Tracy. Before I give the floor to the Netherlands and then to the European Commission, and then to you, John, or would you like to respond directly to what Tracy said?

JONATHAN ZUCK

It's not a response, so I can wait.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

All right, so I just wanted to say that sometimes, you know, as a GAC chair, I sometimes feel like some sort of therapist, you know, psychologist or something, because you hear all kinds of explanations as to why that lack of interest. In some cases, there are some countries that say, well, we have more pressing issues, we have infrastructure issues, we have connectivity issues, and this is

like caring about caviar or Dom Perignon champagne, when you don't have food on the table, just to give a clear example.

There are some other countries that are very happy with their ccTLD, and they see, as a matter of fact, they see the expansion of the DNS space as something detrimental. And then you have very well-developed economies, I would say maybe 10 or 15 countries, that have a very strong DNS industry, and rightly so, because they were the ones who developed the technologies and everything, so I'm not discussing that. I'm just saying that, you know, it's very difficult to find an answer for this.

The answer is most probably in the numbers. But again, in order to get to some meaningful interpretation, we need to have access to the data as the European Commission, you know, Martina correctly pointed out a little while ago. So, I'll stop here and give the floor to the Netherlands, and then I have the European Commission. Please go ahead, Netherlands.

MARCO HOGEWONING

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, good evening, good afternoon, colleagues. This is Marco speaking for the Records Netherlands. Yeah, and I think I concur with Avri's comments that this needs a good looking at once we're done. Timing, of course, is to the essence, but indeed, I think it's important to not just, as we have a tendency to move on and plow on, and maybe five years from now go like, oh yeah, we need another ASP.

I think it's really good to do that ex post analysis and then put it down and also appreciate if we can do that in a way, and at a time where potential applicants or successful applicants or rejected applicants can be interviewed and asked what they bumped into because that was where I struggled a bit is that we know there are obstacles, but it was really hard to find people who would go on the record explaining what obstacles they experienced for risking disclosing what they were doing or risk disclosing the domain names they were after.

So I think we also have to recognize it was really hard to steer this process for lack of concrete input of what the problem really was. It was very much a guessing game. To Tracy, and yeah, I hear you, even in the Netherlands, as Chris Mondini said, we have had a stakeholder event. You notice that outreach and then drawing people in and it wasn't particular for ASP, it was the next round in general.

It's really hard to reach out to people and get them into a next round event if they're not already in the ICANN bubble, if they're not already very engaged with domain names. I wonder if this will ever change, but fully and wholeheartedly support your call for trying to do more to get ICANN out there and get people a better understanding of what ICANN is doing and how to get involved as it might help future Next Rounds and also the prospect of indeed diversifying the community. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you, Netherlands. European Commission.

MARTINA BARBERO

Thank you very much, Nico. Martina Barbero, European Commission for the Records. And I think it's a super interesting discussion and I concur with many of the things that were said by my colleagues. But I was thinking, we are asking people to participate in the Olympics, which is the new round, while maybe they haven't done the regional local competition before.

And it's a bit like a big jump that we're asking from people that indeed struggle with maybe finding the resources to do that and not only the financial, but also the knowledge resources. And so, I think it links a bit with the review of reviews discussion. Because Avri... and yesterday was a very good session discussing what's the point of the reviews.

Well, one of the points of the reviews is that we grow the community and that we are not always speaking to the same people and we make sure that then the people are doing the local and regional Olympics before going to the world stage. And I found this something that was maybe not entirely highlighted yesterday in the review, but for me, there's a link between maybe the issues that we are facing to some extent with the ASP and then some work that must not be done because you cannot ask people in two years to prepare for an Olympic game. It takes more than a decade of

preparation. So, that was my two cents, but concurring with everybody else.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you so much, European Commission. I have Grenada next.

VINCENT ROBERTS

Thank you very much. Vincent Roberts, Grenada. I think the next round is a great product. It has been developed well. I think there's a need to expand the gTLD. The Applicant Support Program is great to support it. The guidebook is wonderful. Everything is good, but your product is not being marketed. I don't think it's a situation where we the underdeveloped countries don't need it is the awareness.

I don't know who's responsible for selling the idea of the importance of this new round, this next round, the New gTLDs, but from my engagement with people, for example, there's a regional organization in the Caribbean called CARICOM, a great candidate for a gTLD. However, the business case has not been made and the awareness.

So I don't know if it's the government engagement team or whoever it is in ICANN Org who should be responsible for, I will call it marketing, creating the awareness because I am convinced that the next round is necessary and I've looked at the support program, the Applicant Support Program, the Guidebook. Everything is in place from the early warning, the reveal, everything is there, but we

don't know about the product that you're making. So, that is my concern. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you very much, Grenada. I have ALAC, Justine Chew.

JUSTINE CHEW

Thanks, Nico. This is Justine from the ALAC. So, I think to answer the question from your colleague in Grenada, it is actually ICANN's responsibility, but ICANN will also say that their mandate to promote the program is also limited to the extent that they will tell you it's happening, but they cannot go overboard in terms of helping anyone in particular to get into the system.

So, there are business cases that have been put out there, but they've been done in collaboration with existing registries. So, yeah, it's a complicated relationship, which I can't get into detail, but it is what it is. I just want to make a comment about what Martina said about the reviews. Now, I don't know whether it would work or not, but in terms of the New gTLD program and the applicant support program, that is part of the GNSO's remit.

So, it's not really within the review or reviews kind of overarching frame. May change, I don't know, but I can, I mean, being the ALAC liaison to the GNSO, I can tell you that this is their very, very protective thing. It's the baby of GNSO, and they're not going to give it up. So, in terms of, we don't know when the subsequent round is going to take place, and we don't know whether there's

going to be another subsequent procedures PDP, we can only hope that we can push for it. And that is where a review of what happens in this coming round is going to take place.

So, the best thing to do about it is to push for a next PDP to review the outputs of this 2026 round and participate in that policy development process to make things better. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you, Justine. So, again-- yeah, go ahead.

JONATHAN ZUCK

You just forgot about me, Nico, that's okay. But I wanted to answer a couple of things. One is the gentleman from Grenada. I'm inclined to agree with you. I think ICANN has always taken the position that sales, is not their job, that they have to stop short of like pitching the idea. And that's always been a fuzzy line. But at the same time, the GGP came back with a recommendation that we get 10 people from underserved regions into the pool of registries.

And I think if we maintain that as a goal and not just metrics associated with how many meetings we had and things like that, but outcome-based. And that's just something that ICANN is talking about more right now. Kurtis is talking about more right now. And if we look at an outcome-based objective for this program, the only number that's out there is 10.

Well, there's a percentage number too. But if we just take the number 10 and say, do whatever it takes to get 10 people in there,

then a lot of different things can happen. And I think we have to get rid of any preconceived notions about what our limitations are and what kind of help we can provide and what we can do. Because I think we all share this goal of expanding this pool of registries out of the over-served regions.

And I think hanging onto that number is very important. I would further say that part of the problem is that there's a lot of costs associated with this other than just the application. And we need to explore some of those things better. Maybe better use of the grant program would have made sense in this context to get people engaged.

We also have a session, the ALAC has a session, the At-Large has a session, in conjunction with the registrar stakeholder group about the fact that one piece of infrastructure that does prevent the growth of the DNS market in underserved regions is a lack of registrars.

That if you don't have the way to sell the domains, then it doesn't make sense to be in a position of trying to market them. And there are artificial barriers to entry for registrars in underserved regions in terms of minimum assets and things like that that are imposed on registrars. There're reasons for doing that because they're concerned about registrars going out of business, et cetera. But the problem is they're preventing entry into the market and we have to solve those problems as well.

So tomorrow, 10:30, there's a session about that. We'll be talking about the artificial barriers to entry for both registries and registrars. And so, I encourage you to attend that session because I think sometimes it might be a bottom-up process that if we get the resale market in place, it might be more enticing to get into the wholesale market.

So there's a lot to be done here, but I'm with Tracy. I think we have to not give up on this particular session and keep pressing to see what we can do to get some new entrance into the registry marketplace.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you so much. Jonathan, I see a hand from Justin. You get, Justine, is that an old hand? All right, so we have two minutes for AOB and then we need to wrap up the session. So, over to you, Justine.

JUSTINE CHEW

Thank you, Nico. Yeah, I raised my hand for the AOB, actually. The ALAC leadership has received, I would say, a plea for us to do something about getting the foot in the door for Latin diacritics for the Next Round. The story is that there is a PDP happening on the Latin diacritics, and my understanding is they have kind of finished their work, but the initial report isn't out yet.

And as we know with all the ICANN processes, nothing gets implemented until it reaches the Board for approval, and then the

Board instructs ICANN to implement it. Now, that is not going to make the April cut for the launch, and we know the Board has already said that they're going to approve the AGB, the African Guidebook, on Thursday.

So I'm asking on behalf of the ALAC whether GAC has a position on doing something about getting Latin Diacritics in the door somehow, and we can probably take this offline as well since we've run out of time, but just to put it out there to see if there's a way that ALAC and GAC can get together to do something about this. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you so much, Justine, and certainly that's a good topic to discuss intercessionally, given the fact that we have absolutely run out of time. So, thank you very much. We're going to have a coffee break now for 30 minutes. And then please be back in the room at 10:30. We'll be discussing WHOIS in registration data. Excuse me? Oh, Canada. You have the last word.

CANADA

I will be very, very quick. I know that everybody is anxious for coffee and for the break. But just to express support, to continue conversations on Latin Script Diacritics, it's certainly an issue for Canada. And I'm happy to have further conversations with you. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you, Canada. Well noted. So, coffee break now. Please be back in the room at 10:30. Thank you. Recording stopped.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]