ICANN87 Bali | AGM – GAC Communique Drafting (1 of 6)
Tuesday, October 20, 2026 – 13:15 to 14:30 WITA

JULIA CHARVOLEN

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I will now leave the floor over to Marco Hogewoning, GAC Vice-Chair. Thank you and over to you. Or Ian.

MARCO HOGEWONING

Thank you. Well, thank you. Good afternoon, I guess. While Ian is still setting up, let me welcome you back. It's the first drafting session. It's this time of the meeting week already. And because we didn't have time during Saturday's opening, I'll first ask Fabien from our wonderful support staff to remind us and then for the

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newcomers guide you through the communiqué drafting process. So, Fabian, thank you and the floor is yours.

FABIEN BETREMIEUX

Thank you. So, this is Fabian Betremieux from the GAC support team. We're trying to show you the usual diagram in a bigger form. So, it should be coming soon. Hopefully, you're quite familiar with it. I'm getting a lot of feedback. Is it just me? Okay, I'll try to push it. So, as a reminder, what we're going to be doing in the next few days is draft the communiqué.

The communiqué is the key consensus output of a GAC meeting. The communiqué is the document in which the GAC reports on its engagement with various community groups, reports on its internal activities, and this is where the GAC also states its position on issues of importance as well as potential consensus advice that's given to the ICANN Board. The communiqué is not the only output document. An important document for the records of the GAC is the minutes of the ICANN meeting.

So, this is another source for future reference that reflect the deliberations of the GAC during an ICANN meeting. Excellent, thanks for the diagram. This is perfect. I was going to get to the process. So, I've spoken to what the communiqué is. I've mentioned that we're going to be drafting the communiqué over the last few days. Drafting is only one step of a process that has

three phases. Preparation phase before the meeting, development phase during the meeting, and the review phase after the meeting.

So you've experienced already over the last few days a consideration of the GAC communiqué in plenary session. We try to help the topic leads carve out some time during each session to discuss what may be considered for text in the communiqué. And this is to help with preparing the committee for the drafting stage and potentially reduce the time it takes to draft the communiqué. You should have received in your emails the link to the communiqué as a reminder that was shared during the preparation phase. The goal of which was to identify potential topics that were already being considered in the communiqué.

And this time around, you may recall that Portugal had shared three topics that are reflected in the communiqué at the moment. And so we expect that we will grow, obviously, the amount of text and issues for consideration in the communiqué over the last, today, this afternoon for sure, and over the last few days. One of the reasons why in plenary session we've moved to considering communiqué at the end of each plenary session is for members to identify who are the topic leads considering text for the communiqué and on what topics.

And so that if you as a GAC member are interested in participating in the drafting of such text, you identify who to talk to. And we encourage that GAC members and topic leads coordinate as much as possible in advance of communiqué drafting so that it makes the

process more efficient. We've experienced in the past spending quite some time in drafting sessions comparing various texts on the same topic.

So our hope is that by helping GAC members and GAC topic leads identify each other, get together before drafting, we can avoid spending too much time debating different versions of text on a given issue. I'm checking my notes to make sure I'm hitting all the points.

The way contributions work is that you can use the Google document that we shared. Please do not share the link publicly in a chat so that we avoid any interference with the process. You can propose text in the document. We ask that when you do so, you identify yourself so that we see who the text is provided by. You can also work through us, the GAC support team, and we can insert text for you.

At some point, the Google document will be closed when we reach a point where the text is substantial enough and in order to preserve the stability of the text. And in which case, if contribution is not accepted directly in the document, we will be your channel to contribute text to the communiqué.

And finally, I will remind you that you can use the GAC support team at any point if you'd like to check a reference, if you'd like us to research precedent, or any information you need regarding a topic or text that you are considering. So, that's for this week. Once the

communiqué is approved, hopefully as soon as possible in the next few days, we will then move into the review period.

The review period is aimed at ensuring that the entire GAC membership has had sufficient opportunity to review the text. This review period was conceived and instituted during the COVID pandemic to help deal with participation barrier, time difference, language barriers, etc., and ensure maximum opportunities for all GAC delegations to participate and consider the communiqué. This has never happened before, but if a GAC delegation found a reason to object to any element of the communiqué, that delegation would have to express so, and we'd have to reconvene the GAC to consider the objection.

So usually, the request during the review period is that GAC delegations consider objections very carefully, given their impact on the ability to publish the communiqué, and that if there are concerns that are not substantive, we can certainly address that with the GAC leadership. I think I've covered all I needed to say. I didn't mention that it's a 72-hour review period. So, usually the communiqué is published roughly on the Monday after the meeting, given the review period. That's it for me, I think, on the process, and we can probably move on to looking at the communiqué. Thank you.

IAN SHELDON Thanks, Fabien. I'm Ian Sheldon, GAC Vice Chair, for the record. I think before we dive into the document itself, I should also mention

that I'm keen to continue using small group drafting efforts, as we've been doing in previous meetings. I think they are quite efficient and effective, and so as we go through the document as it stands today, we'll also be looking to get a sense of who's interested in taking part in more of the direct drafting for each session.

So, as we go through, we'll find opportunities to pause, collect names, and make sure the right people are looped in on those conversations. Obviously, there will still be opportunities as a group and in plenary to go through the text, but I also realize that not all committee members are interested in all parts of the communiqué. So, there may be times over the next day or two where we pause and give opportunity for those small groups to take the text away and work them up before presenting them back to the GAC plenary. With that, perhaps we can start going through the document.

FABIEN BETREMIEUX So, I'll just go down the document to remind everyone of the structure and potentially help newcomers catch up with how the committee is structured. So, we usually have an introduction that speaks to the meeting and the participation during the meeting. Then we have a section about inter-constituency activities and community engagement. This is where the GAC reports on its meetings with the various groups, including the board, etc. Here, we are generally only reporting the topics that are discussed. We

do not discuss the substance of those discussions. That's for the minutes of the meeting as well as the transcripts and the records that exist of those interactions.

The third section is internal matters. This is where the GAC notes, reports, and notes on its internal activities, membership, elections, leadership, and a few other topics. Operational GAC working groups, obviously, where working groups, when needed, report on their activities. And then, finally, we have other topics, such as operational matters, and sometimes we add other ones.

The next section is the first of the most substantive sections of the communiqué, issues of importance to the GAC, where the GAC shares its views on ongoing processes on various issues. It's been suggested that this part of the communiqué is used for ensuring the community is aware of GAC views and to serve as a potential precursor or advanced signal for potential future advice when concerns raise to that level.

And so that takes us to the next section, section 5, which is consensus advice to the ICANN Board. This is a very specific section that is tied to the ICANN bylaws and the definition of consensus advice in the bylaws and what that entails in terms of obligations for the ICANN Board to consider and potential engagement with the GAC should the Board consider not to follow GAC advice.

And so that's why we have an introduction in that section with a footnote that points to those bylaw provisions. And so if you are not familiar with those, it's a short read that is really going straight

to the process and to what the GAC advice means to the ICANN Board and how the ICANN Board is mandated to process GAC advice.

And then finally, we have another section, which is section 6, follow-up and previous GAC advice. And that's where the GAC sometimes reminds or recalls previous advice that it deems need continued attention. And in this section, we usually try to stay as close as possible to the wording of GAC advice that was previously issued to avoid any kind of difficulty of interpretation.

I'll mention that the previous two sections, issues of importance and GAC advice, lead to when they are present in the committee, when they are issued, they lead to an engagement between the GAC and the Board after the meeting to ensure on the GAC advice side that the ICANN Board understands the advice as intended. And so this is called the advice clarification call, communiqué clarification call.

And the other call regarding the issues of importance is a sort of a response by the Board to those issues of importance in a call with the GAC. The response to GAC advice comes in other forms, it's not a specific call, it's more of a written response generally by the Board in what is called a scorecard.

And then finally, there's just a final section in the communiqué which refers to the next ICANN meeting, but has no substance to it

other than providing this reference for readers of the communiqué. I think we've covered it all.

In terms of text available for review in this drafting session, we've filled in all the first few sections of the communiqué, so we have that to review at some point, but we usually start with the more substantive parts of the communiqué. And at the moment, we do not have any indication that advice is being considered. We do have text proposed already on issues of importance, as well as indications that text is being prepared on more than the issues that are present here.

So I think one important objective of the first few communiqué sessions are to ensure that we have a sense of the space or the list of items that are considered, as well as who is working on this so that everyone is aware, so I don't know how you want to proceed from here.

IAN SHELDON

Issues of importance. I think what I'd like to start to do here is get a sense of the topics the committee is looking to flag in this section, before we start diving a little deeper on what we're specifically flagging in them. So, at this stage, we have reform of ICANN's review system. There'll be a section here on new gTLD Next Round issues. There's a section here on universal acceptance and diversity. And finally, we have DNS abuse. I might pause to see if any other of our committee members are considering other items

for this section, before we go back and start talking about specifically what we're exploring in them. Marco, please.

MARCO HOGEWONING

Maybe again, just for clarity, as you just encouraged us to work in smaller groups. So, the new gTLD topic leads have a smaller group currently working on text, so please reach out to me if you want to access to that preliminary draft. Also to note that our colleague Tracy is preparing, I believe, some text regarding the ASP and addressing some of the things we've seen with diversity. So, there's two drafts floating around pertaining to gTLDs right now.

IAN SHELDON

Thank you. Maybe we can start with reform of ICANN's review system. Is this, I think this is Portugal's text. Is that right? Just in time, yeah. I might give you a quick review and then perhaps we can start forming some of those small drafting groups. For those who are interested in working through some of this text, maybe they could join Portugal in that effort. So I might give it a quick, a very quick read.

The GAC considers that the revised review framework should explicitly preserve the full substantive scope of bylaws section 4.6(b)(ii)(B). The framework should clearly identify where the GAC's interaction with the board and the broader community and ICANN's effective consideration of GAC public policy input will be assessed.

Any allocation between the structural review and the accountability and transparency review should ensure complete coverage, avoid duplication and preserve the GAC's own review arrangements under section 4.4(b). So, with that, I might pause there if there are questions. We can take this text offline, work with our Portuguese colleague to make sure this reflects the GAC's views. I see the European Commission, please.

MARTINA BARBERO: Thank you very much, Chair. This is Martina, European Commission for the records. This is a topic that is indeed important to us. We might want to recall some of the previous considerations from previous communique. If you give us maybe until the next break to see how we approach that, I think we can be more efficient.

IAN SHELDON: Perfect. Thank you. We'll hit pause on this paragraph and perhaps let Portugal and the European Commission advance the text, as well as perhaps Egypt as well. If anybody else is interested, come join our colleagues down the front here at the break.

Two, new gTLD Next Round. I might hand to, as Marco mentioned, there will be some text coming on this. If anybody is interested in taking part in that drafting effort, perhaps you can come see Marco and be looped in on that work. Is there anything else you'd like to add to that, Marco, on that effort?

MARCO HOGEWONING Not at this stage, I think.

IAN SHELDON Thank you. Three, universal acceptance and diversity. The GAC emphasizes that a multilingual and inclusive DNS requires both diverse participation in the new gTLD program and effective universal acceptance. It encourages interested GAC members to promote UA readiness in public digital services and relevant procurement specifications supported by practical technical guidance.

The GAC also requests reporting on regional and script diversity in the 2026 round, including outcomes for applicant support program participants to identify remaining barriers and inform future improvements. I can see the text is also being edited right now. So, who's interested in helping advance this language? Yes? Anybody else? Please. And I see Lebanon as well.

ZEINA BOU HARB Just wondering why we are joining the two topics, Universal Acceptance with Diversity, and in my understanding, diversity here is related to the new gTLD or the ASP, so why we are putting it together with the universal acceptance?

IAN SHELDON That's a fair point. Do we have the original drafter of this language in the room? Any chance that might be Portugal again? Should we split UA and diversity? I see nodding. Christine, please.

CHRISTINE ARIDA Maybe we can put the Language on Diversity in the Next Round part. I think that would make more sense.

IAN SHELDON Okay, perhaps we can, again, let's park this language, see if we can form a small group to work out how we split this and come back. Okay, let's move on to DNS abuse. DNS abuse topic leads, how are we tracking for Language on this section? I see U.S., please.

SUSAN CHALMERS Thank you, Chair. We did not work on this over lunch. We just had our session this morning, so we'd appreciate some time to be able to further develop the text.

IAN SHELDON So, those who might be interested in DNS abuse, please check in with our DNS abuse topic leads, and hopefully we can have a little bit more text coming back on this shortly. I see Argentina's hand.

MARINA FLEGO Hi. This is Argentina, for the record. Sorry, I'm on my way to the room, but I am following the session from here. I would like to

comment on the number three, Universal Acceptance and Diversity. I feel that the text proposed by Portugal really reflects the views on this topic, but maybe as the diversity is related to the new gTLD round in general and adding to what was mentioned some minutes before, we could just refer to universal acceptance and skipping that part of diversity of the title as it is developed on the paragraph per se and as it is also a matter that is considered in general for the Next Round rather than just solely for this topic.

IAN SHELDON

Thank you, Argentina. Well noted. I think that accords with the discussion we had just had and would encourage you to join the drafting group on universal acceptance and perhaps I can ask that drafting group to make sure they connect to the work that Marco is leading on the Next Round discussion. I see one more hand. Yes, please.

ABDALMONEN GALILA

Yes, this is Abdalmonen Galila, for the record. I am the topic lead of universal acceptance. I would like to highlight -- This is an echo. I would like to highlight that we need to add some words about UA Champion from the government as a kind of encouragement for the government to apply for this as it will encourage after a while other governments to join the initiative and for more promotion and adoption of universal acceptance. There is a lot of work to do and should be highlighted in the communique. Thank you.

IAN SHELDON

Thank you. Perhaps you can include those comments when the small groups get going on this drafting work. So, please join our colleagues from Portugal, Lebanon and Egypt in that work. Thank you. So, this brings us to the end of our issues of importance section. Marco, please.

MARCO HOGEWONING

Maybe, I'm sorry to put you on the spot here. Sorry to put you in quite any confusion. Could you maybe briefly say what you are addressing in your draft in regards to diversity and whether you can accommodate this?

TRACY HACKSHAW

Thanks, Marco. This is Tracy Hackshaw, UPU. Yes, we are not using the phrase diversity, but we are utilizing the concept of what happened in the ASP program. ASP in particular with a mention of what happened in the round and reflecting not only the outcome, but also what we are proposing to do going forward with regards to a review of the ASP in particular.

So, it's not just stating that we need more things, but it's recommending an approach. So, I think we can accommodate those concepts and it will be more fulsome in its recommendations. So for those who wish to contribute, I guess you could see Marco to add your name to the growing list, but absolutely, it will be accommodated. Thank you.

IAN SHELDON Thank you, Tracy. So, I might pause here and see if there are any other thoughts on topics for issues of importance. Without being too presumptive, I'm also wondering if we should touch on registration data as a topic here. It seems like something we have discussed in some detail across the last few days, and so I'm wondering if we should flag this here as well. I can see Canada has their hand up. Please.

DAVID BENARD Thanks, Chair. Yes, good idea. I think registration data issues will likely be touched on here. We're working on some language on the SSAD SRT that was mentioned throughout the meeting, so if folks have any interest there, they can always touch base with me on that. Thank you.

IAN SHELDON Perfect. Thank you. Are there any other substantive topics top of mind for the GAC while we're on issues of importance? US, please.

OWEN FLETCHER Thank you. This is Owen Fletcher. In addition to the SSAD text that our Canadian colleague mentioned, under the registration data section, the US will suggest some text on privacy proxy issues in coordination with the other topic leads. Thanks. Thank you. Well noted.

IAN SHELDON

Any other thoughts at this stage for issues of importance? I'm really just trying to get a sense for the breadth of topics for this section at this stage. I see no further hands on this. So with that, perhaps we can move back up to the start of the document and start looking at some of the preamble sections.

I don't foresee any of this section changing, but perhaps we can leave some of these to the end of our drafting session as we conclude the meeting. So, I am wondering if it might be sensible to pause this discussion and let some of our drafting groups go and get drafting. Would the committee be amenable to doing some direct drafting in small groups at this time? I see no objections, and I also see quite a lot of work ahead of us.

So with that, perhaps we can conclude this discussion. Please seek out the topic leads and drafting leads on each of those sections. Share your views. I'll let you organize yourselves, but do let leadership or staff know if you're unsure on who to talk to and where to go. And we will reconvene in this room at 3:00pm for our meeting with the ICANN Board. Thank you.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]**