ICANN87 Bali | AGM – GAC Communique Drafting (6 of 6)
Thursday, October 22, 2026 – 09:00 to 10:00 WITA

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Welcome to the ICANN87 GAC Communiqué Drafting Session number 6 on Thursday, 22 October at 9:00 local time. 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 only 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.

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. I will now leave the floor over to Ian Sheldon, GAC Vice-Chair. Thank you.

IAN SHELDON

Thank you, Julia. Good morning, everyone. I hope you've all had a good evening and have returned recharged and energized for our last day. Welcome to another Communiqué drafting session. I

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.

understand we've had some small edits come through overnight. We'll work through those this morning before hopefully wrapping this all up in short order. So with that, I might give the floor to my Vice-Chair colleague, Marco, who will take us through some of these edits. Thanks, Marco.

MARCO HOGEWONING Good morning also from me, colleagues. Welcome. I believe staff has temporarily restored access to the Google Doc which contains the text, so you can also see those edits online. I am going to take them one by one top to bottom. And the first one I see, if I'm correct, Fabien, is in Section 4, the GAC working groups, where indeed we have some revised language on the GAC Working Group on Human Rights and International Law. I read the text again as you've seen; there is some text struck out.

So the proposed text for this section will be: In the months following ICANN86, the GAC HRILWG has continued to advance several initiatives in line with its mandate. The working group has also continued its efforts to promote sign language interpretation as a means of enhancing the participation of persons with disabilities in ICANN activities. Unfortunately, ICANN's budgetary constraints have left further implementation dependent on the willingness and support of the host countries, at least temporarily.

The working group intends to pursue opportunities to resume these efforts at future ICANN meetings, ideally with renewed support from ICANN. The HRILWG noted the initiatives undertaken

by the Indonesian government as host of ICANN87 to introduce local language domain names using non-Latin scripts under its national ccTLD.

However, the working group expressed concern over the limited number of Internationalized Domain Names, IDN, applications submitted to the new gTLD program 2026 round. As highlighted during the GAC's discussion with the ICANN new gTLD program team in Bali, only 21 IDN applications were submitted, representing approximately 1 to 2% of the total applications. While the final figures will be confirmed following String Confirmation Day in November, these preliminary numbers raise concerns that the 2026 round may not deliver the anticipated increase in linguistic and geographic diversity.

With that, as I was reading, a small edit as we struck out the second paragraph, am I supposed to remove the word "also" from the third as it is probably more correct, so the working group has continued its efforts? And with that, I open the floor for any other comments, thoughts, edits.

SUADA HADZOVIC

If I may, I'm Suada Hadzovic, co-chair of the Human Rights International Law Working Group. I would like to wait Giacomo Mazzone to make a discussion with Giacomo and other members, and we will give our edits too. Thank you.

MARCO HOGEWONING Okay, understood. Just for our own logistics, can you anticipate a timeline for that?

SUADA HADZOVIC Well, Giacomo is on the way.

MARCO HOGEWONING Okay, thank you. Then I guess we'll hold off for this text for now pending Giacomo's arrival, and we can continue to the next piece, which is the GAC Universal Acceptance and IDN Working Group, where we also see some changes. Just let me quickly take the actual text in front of me.

The GAC Universal Acceptance and Internationalized Domain Names Working Group held a session at ICANN87 in Bali, which highlighted the importance of integrating UA into national digital strategies, where a number of governments expressed their interest in the GAC UA Champion initiative and shared their experiences and challenges in implementing UA at a national level, especially in underserved regions, aiming to encourage UA adoption with digital public sector policies and services in all countries.

It was noted that the window for other governments to express their interest remains open. Updates provided during the session included the UNESCO-ICANN policy brief, preparations for UA Day 2027, and the ICANN UA Expert Working Group. That's it.

You will see that the first and second paragraph will now be merged into a whole. Again, any comments from the floor? I see the US has their hand up. Ms. Chalmers?

SUSAN CHALMERS: Thank you, Vice-Chair. We have met with some colleagues earlier this morning and sent language to the GAC support, so it is updated language and a proposal is -- We'd ask that be reflected on the screen. Thank you.

MARCO HOGEWONING: Thank you. Fabien, do you see fit to do that on the spot? [AUDIO BREAK]

Okay, while we sort that out and I see a comment in the chat Peru, but I guess that's to this. I see hand up from CTU, Nigel. Is this to the Universal Acceptance?

NIGEL CASSIMIRE: Yes.

MARCO HOGEWONING: Can you then please hold until we have the final version in screen? Thank you. Meanwhile, I'll continue reading for the GAC operational matters, Section 5, where we also have small edits and let staff work behind the scenes.

Pursuant to GAC Operating Principle 53 and following the completion of the required 60-day consultation period initiated in ICANN86, GAC members in attendance voted to adopt proposed administrative revisions to the GAC Operating Principles. Developed by the GAC Operating Principles Evolution Working Group, GOPE WG, these revisions are intended to improve clarity and consistency, update referencing and terminology, and align the operating principles with current GAC practices.

So a minor change, changing to administrative revisions. Do you agree? I see no hands. I still do not see any hands, so I guess we can make this green again. Again, we will do once we run through all the edits a final read-through for approval, but this is done. Let me quickly consult with the team on where we go next. [AUDIO BREAK]

We're back up, so all the edits to Universal Acceptance are in, I believe. So the GAC Universal Acceptance and IDN Working Group, UA-IDN WG.

The GAC Universal Acceptance and Internationalized Domain Names Working Group held a session at ICANN87 in Bali to address ways of supporting the universal use of different scripts and languages and longer TLDs online.

The session highlighted the importance of integrating UA into national digital strategies, where a number of governments expressed their interest in the GAC UA Champion initiative and shared their experiences and challenges in implementing UA at a

national level, especially in underserved regions, aiming to encourage UA adoption within digital public sector policies and services in all countries.

It was noted that the window for other governments to express their interest remain open. Updates provided during the session included the UNESCO-ICANN policy brief, preparations for UA Day 2027, and the ICANN UA Expert Working Group.

Again, may I invite the committee, if you have any comments or suggestions, please raise your hand. [AUDIO BREAK]

I see a comment in the chat from Peru. I don't see you in the room yet, I think, but noted that you prefer yesterday's version. As a chair, I'm also biased in progressing forward. I deem that ship has sailed, but noted your preference to revert back to the original that was there last night.

Any other comments on the suggested text? I see the US Government. Ms. Chalmers?

SUSAN CHALMERS Thank you. Are we reading from what's presently on the screen? Oh, yes, okay. Just give us one minute, please.

MARCO HOGEWONING Noted.

SUSAN CHALMERS: No concerns with the present paragraph, thank you.

MARCO HOGEWONING: Thank you, US. I see Egypt. Christine?

CHRISTINE ARIDA: Yeah, thank you, Christine Arida. We can support the text as it stands with the modification. Thank you.

MARCO HOGEWONING: Thank you, Egypt. Peru, can I ask you to support this, having heard the room? It seems that we have agreement on the new text. [AUDIO BREAK]

Thank you, Peru. I see in chat Peru supports as well. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you. We can green this text. [AUDIO BREAK]

Just checking with the drafters. I believe there were some pending edits on the ASP section. Have these all been transmitted to the secretariat? [AUDIO BREAK]

Okay. We're going to go to Universal Acceptance first while we work on the ASP section. Just for clarity, this is number three in the issues of importance under the heading Universal Acceptance: The GAC welcomes and encourages the further adoption of Universal Acceptance for the better use of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), Email Address Internationalization (EAI), and new generic top-level domains to support the use of different scripts and languages online. The GAC notes that interested GAC members

could promote UA readiness within digital public-sector policies and services supported by practical technical guidance.

I see a hand up from the US. Ms. Chalmers.

SUSAN CHALMERS: Thank you. Just to note that we have provided updated language to GAC support for this paragraph. Thanks.

MARCO HOGEWONING: Thank you. Then Mr. Chairman, may I suggest we adjourn for 5 minutes to work through everything? Okay, let's pause for 5 minutes, go grab a cup of coffee and I encourage the editors to work as fast as possible. Thank you.

Sorry, Egypt?

CHRISTINE ARIDA: No, not to make any confusion, but I think it's very simple because it's pretty much like what we added. So it's not something that's going to take time, but up to you. Thank you.

MARCO HOGEWONING: No, let's just work to make sure that we actually have all the final versions there. Thank you.

US still wants floor? Believe it's old hand. Okay. Well, let's have a coffee. [AUDIO BREAK]

Thank you. Apologies to keep you waiting. I believe we've now got all the edits in. So again, I'll take you top to bottom from the items that are still pending. So Benedetta, if you can scroll down to see where we are. There is the HRILWG.

Now I neither see Suada or Giacomo in the room, so I'll hold off for that. But unless we see any other changes, my inclination is to just say this is approved text. Going down to the Applicant Support Program, Section 2(d) in the issues of importance, yes, 2(d).

So this is a subheading under the new gTLD program: The ICANN Applicant Support Program. The GAC acknowledges ICANN org's efforts in administering the Applicant Support Program, ASP, and the greater uptake compared to the 2012 round. However, it notes the gap between ASP-initiated and approved applications, as well as differences in regional participation, particularly affecting underserved regions.

The GAC stresses the importance of a timely lessons learned evaluation to understand applicants' experiences, including why some prospective and approved applicants did not proceed. The GAC requests the ICANN Board and ICANN org to work with the GAC and the wider community to deliver this evaluation, building on existing evaluation activities and incorporating structured exit surveys and interviews as appropriate with approved and unsuccessful ASP applicants.

The analysis should examine outreach, financial, and non-financial support, bracket open, including decisions relating to the ASP fee

reduction and whether existing support levels are effective, brackets close, and differences in regional participation, drawing on and capturing participants' experiences while these remain recent. The GAC expects initial findings being shared with the community ideally before ICANN88.

For the 2026 round, the GAC encourages ICANN org to maintain targeted support guidance and access to pro bono services for ASP supported applicants, throughout the remaining application stages to help prevent applicants' withdrawal due to further financial or technical barriers, including legal costs in objection proceedings and the cost of string contention resolution.

That is currently the text for the Applicant Support Program. I see a hand up from the CTU, Nigel.

NIGEL CASSIMIRE Thank you, Marco. Good morning, everyone. Nigel Cassimire from CTU. In reviewing the proposed changes to the text, I think we're mostly cool with -- well, we can tolerate the amendments being proposed with one additional suggestion, which is in the second paragraph where the new text is put in and it talks about "and differences in regional participation." I would add on there, "particularly for underserved regions." The second paragraph, yes.

MARCO HOGEWONING Thank you CTU. Any further comments?

So it now reads: financial and non-financial support, brackets open, including decisions relating to the ASP fee reduction and whether existing support levels are effective, brackets close, and differences in regional participation, particularly for underserved regions, drawing on and capturing participants' experiences.

Any further comments? I see none, so then I'm confident to say this is done. We can green the text, and waiting to see what else is there. [AUDIO BREAK]

So we have, I believe, finalized the text on Section 3 of the issues of importance on Universal Acceptance as well. It's a relatively short paragraph: The GAC welcomes and encourages the further adoption of Universal Acceptance, UA, for the better use of Internationalized Domain Names, IDNs, email address internationalization, EAI, and new generic top-level domains to support the universal use of different scripts and languages, longer TLDs.

I guess, is there something missing? It seems the use of different scripts and languages and longer TLDs, would that be the intent of the editors?

CHRISTINE ARIDA: As well as.

MARCO HOGEWONING: "As well as" is a suggestion by Egypt, which is fine with me. Sorry, let me try this again: The GAC welcomes and encourages the further

adoption of Universal Acceptance, UA, for the better use of Internationalized Domain Names, IDNs, email address internationalization, EAI, and new generic top-level domains to support the universal use of different scripts and languages as well as longer TLDs. The GAC notes that interested GAC members could promote UA readiness within digital public sector policies and services supported by practical technical guidance.

Do I see any comments from the floor, any suggestions? I see none. With that, thank you to the editors for their hard work, and I guess we have this one done as well. [AUDIO BREAK]

Then I think the only thing I have now open is the -- HRIL or are there any others? Nope. So back to the working group sections. Yes. HRILWG. There were no further edits, I understood. I see Suada back in.

I'm inclined to close this topic unless somebody now indicates that they have text ready to go.

SUADA HADZOVIC

Really, I need to propose to wait for Giacomo, and he, I think, he will be maybe after 5 to 10 minutes.

MARCO HOGEWONING

Well, we are in your hands, and I know that we started late, but technically this session is three more minutes, and this is supposed to be the last drafting session.

Ian, if I may defer to you to guide, because as far as I'm concerned, all the edits are done and we could go to a second reading in the next session.

SUADA HADZOVIC Okay, okay.

IAN SHELDON Thank you, Marco. We have to proceed. He's had the better part of this whole session to read and review and provide comments.

SUADA HADZOVIC Okay.

IAN SHELDON Are there any other comments on this language? Otherwise, we will be looking to accept the amendments and hopefully go through the document one final time. [AUDIO BREAK]

I see no more hands. Perhaps we can accept the changes to this section.

MARCO HOGEWONING Iran.

IAN SHELDON Oh, please, yes.

MOHSEN NIKBIN Hello, this is Mohsen for the record from Iran. I would like to know the rationale before these propositions. I don't know why this is proposed.

MARCO HOGEWONING You mean the rationale behind the text edits or the rationale behind -- Okay.

MOHSEN NIKBIN Yes, mostly the second one: "welcomed and supported the ongoing cooperation with UNESCO."

MARCO HOGEWONING Okay, I believe this text originated from the United States. Would the United States be willing to enlighten us why this has been suggested? Susan Chalmers, US?

SUSAN CHALMERS Yes, thank you, Chair, certainly. Given the United States' decision to withdraw from UNESCO, that is why we proposed these edits. We could certainly accept a factual account that the working group discussed Universal Acceptance and UNESCO-ICANN work without expressing welcoming or support for the UNESCO work in general as a committee. I hope that provides a sufficient response to our colleague from Iran. Thank you.

MARCO HOGEWONING Thank you, US. With that kind of reflecting what factually happened, Iran, would you be suggesting additional text or can we close this? Is the rationale sufficient? I see a nod. Well, thank you for that.

MOHSEN NIKBIN It is sufficient, yes.

MARCO HOGEWONING Then I think we're good to go, Mr. Chairman.

IAN SHELDON Unfortunately, we are at time for this session. So we will need to break and reconvene at our next session, which will be this afternoon at 13:30. Thank you. At 13:15, after lunch. We'll clean the text up and do a final run-through and then have the GAC closing. Thank you.

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