ICANN69 | Community Days Sessions -  Joint Meeting: ICANN Board Members with Fellowship and NextGen Program Participants
Wednesday, October 14, 2020 - 16:00 to 17:00 CEST

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:     This session will now begin.  Please start the recording.

**[ This meeting is being recorded ]**

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:     Thank you.

Hello, everyone -- hello, and welcome, everyone, to the joint meeting between the ICANN board members and fellowship and NextGen program participants.

And we will also have ICANN president and CEO joining us today.

My name is Siranush Vardanyan, and I am the remote participation manager for this session.

Please note that this session is being recorded and follows 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, which I will be noting in the chat shortly.

I will read questions and comments aloud during the time set by the chair or moderator of this session.

This session includes real-time transcription. To use the real-time transcription, click on the "closed caption" button in the Zoom tool bar.

Interpretation for this session will include five U.N. languages and will be conducted using both Zoom and the remote simultaneous interpretation platform operated by Congress Rental Network.

Attendees are encouraged to download the Congress Rental Network application, following instructions in the Zoom chat and from the meeting details document available in the meeting website.

If you would like to ask your question or make your comment verbally, please raise your hand. When called upon, kindly unmute your microphone and take the floor.

Please state your name for the record, and the language you will speak, if speaking a language other than English.

Please also speak clearly, at a reasonable pace, to allow for accurate interpretation.

Mute your microphone when you are done speaking.

When speaking, be sure to mute all other devices, including the Congress Rental Network application.

Finally, we kindly ask everyone in this meeting to abide by the expected ICANN standards of behavior. I will post the link to this in the Zoom chat.

Having said this, I will now give the floor to ICANN president and CEO, Göran Marby.

Göran, please.

GÖRAN MARBY: Hello, my friends.

Hey, I just realized something. It was more or less on -- a year ago, I visited you in Armenia. And you invited me to your home and produced me with so much food, I haven't eaten since then.

It's one of my absolute favorite memories. And I'm looking forward to come back.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Looking forward, too.

GÖRAN MARBY: Anyway, my friends, it's nice to be here, and I really miss meeting you in person.

My team knows that this is one of my favorite things to do during an ICANN meeting, because you often ask me questions which I don't have an answer to directly. I actually have to think about it. And I always love the interactions.

This is important not only for me, but it's also important for everybody. The fellowship, NextGen newcomer programs is really about recognizing something that we've not done. Over the last couple of days, in board meetings and in interactions with community, I heard one sentence coming up all the time, and that is, oh, by the way, no one in world history has done this before.

Imagine that after, you know, ICANN has been around for, is it now 22, 23 years, and we still encounter things that no one in world history has done before.

And I know that I will keep saying that for the rest of the year and the rest of the time I'm with ICANN, because we are always dealing with something or some instances no one has done before. That's why we need new people coming in to form the sort of next generation of what this thing, what the Internet is, to

challenge old beliefs and coming up with new initiatives to do things differently.

That's why the importance on this -- on this program from ICANN is sort of a part of our DNA.

It's no -- it is harder, because it (indiscernible), because a big part of ICANN is to meet each other, to talk to each other, to get to know each other. But I'm really happy that we can do this this week. And I thank you all for taking the time and joining us in this, despite the fact that we can't see you in real life.

But, anyway, I always keep this short, this speech, extremely short, not being well-known for giving long speeches anyway, because I hope I will get some questions from you guys.

So over to you again.


SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    Thank you, Göran.

And with that, I would like to give the floor to Maarten Botterman, chair of the ICANN board.

Maarten, please.

| MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: | Hi, Siranush, hi, everybody.  Yes, I agree with Göran, this is where the new blood comes in.  And new blood is always refreshing. |
|---|---|

So being with this session is a privilege.  And Siranush asked me to tell a little bit about the priorities of the board and where we are focused on at the moment.

It won't be a surprise that the board's priorities are very much linked with the community, because we are one system, where community sets the policies and sets the priorities, and where the organization makes sure it can happen after the board says it's okay from a fiduciary perspective, so taking into account the bylaws, the law, and reasonability.  And sometimes we need to balance and to sometimes we need to dive deeper to understand what it is exactly that we talk about, how it exactly could work, as that would make a difference in the efforts that needs to come from the ecosystem at large.

So on our longer-term priorities, and I'm pretty sure your ears have been bent about that a lot, it's about the strategic plan. The strategic plan for the coming five years really helps us to understand what we should be focused on and how we can make sure that at the end of the five years, we can say we delivered on our mission, on our strategic plan.

So if you haven't read it yet, make sure you read that.

As you have seen from the program, the big issues from a policy perspective are EPDP. Are also related to GDPR responses, how do we deal with the WHOIS system. Are Sub-Pro, so how do we deal with new rounds of TLDs. Also DNS abuse, how do we make sure that we do our bit in making sure that the Internet is as safe as it can be.

And next to that, of course, you must have heard of ATRT, Accountability and Transparency Review Team's report, which gives some indication of how we can change the reviews in such a way that it becomes -- that it remains sustainable, that ICANN as an ecosystem continues to be able to deliver.

The latter is also one of the key priorities where the board is focused on, the evolution of the multistakeholder model, how can we ensure that the effectiveness of the multistakeholder model is enhanced over time, rather than degrading.

With the extra challenge now of not having the normal way of meeting, because normally, we're in the same location which has the social context, but also the advantage of the same time zone.

Right now in this call, there are people here who morning is still very early, and there's people here who are later in their evening already or maybe in their night. That gives different levels of

energy as well. We have respect for all of those who participate, despite the time zone challenges.

The social challenges are in those that the short, stupid questions, the people interaction doesn't happen in normal ways. It doesn't mean it can't happen. So please look out for opportunities to reach out to people from the ecosystem. You will find that many of them are very willing to engage with you, explain things to you, help you get up to speed when you go out in the ecosystem to find your place if you're now hooked to ICANN after these two intensive weeks.

So with that, like Göran, I don't want to keep it too long. But, really, also, I'm very happy to say that new people coming into this unique system that we have at ICANN as fellows, as NextGen, can actually come a long way.

We ask you to commit yourself to this week, to dive in deeply, and after that, also to seek where you can contribute best.

And two of my fellow board members were actually fellows in your session before they came to the board. And very happy also for Siranush to introduce Leon Sanchez and Lito Ibarra.

So welcome, everybody. Don't hesitate to approach me when you have questions, via whatever means. And in the meanwhile, wishing you a great week to come.

And I'll stay here for the questions as well.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Maarten. Thank you very much. And with great pleasure, I would like to introduce our two board members who are actually the role model for all fellows who join us today for this session. And the first I would like to go for vice-chair of ICANN Board, Leon Sanchez.

Leon, please. The floor is yours.

LEON SANCHEZ: Thank you very much, Siranush. It's always good to be here with the fellows. As we say, and you must know that by now, once a fellow, you are always a fellow.

And Siranush was a fellow herself, too. So you can see the different paths that fellows follow within the ICANN ecosystem, within the ICANN community. And I am really pleased to be here.

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize, as it has been said in the chat, that I think that myself and Lito are proof that the Fellowship Program works. The Fellowship Program actually brings in people that add value to what we do in ICANN. I think that the fellowship program is one of the foundational pieces of

the multistakeholder model within ICANN to bring in new blood, new ideas, people that are independently brought into the ecosystem, and also a very important way to support those in underserved regions, in underserved countries, developing regions in our planet to be able to contribute meaningfully to the work we do in ICANN.

When I started back in 2012, that was my first meeting as a fellow in Prague, I really didn't think I could end up being in the Board as a board member, less to say the vice-chair of the Board. So what I want to tell you with this is that you are the one that will set your path within ICANN, and if you work hard, if you listen to people, you learn continuously from the great community that we have. You can literally reach to whatever leadership position you want to serve under.

And this is -- This is a very important thing. Every leadership position in ICANN is to serve our community. It is not a position for, you know, exercising any kind of power, if you want to put it that way. Leadership positions within ICANN are to serve our community and to serve the organization and to do something for the Internet ecosystem.

So keep that in mind. Continue learning. And of course I don't want to take much time on this conversation. I would rather turn this into a more interactive session. And happy to address

any questions or any comments that you have. But before that, I would like to also make a personal comment and an acknowledgment to Siranush and to my Armenian colleagues which are going through a very difficult time these days. And this is just proof that they go beyond duty. They put every effort to support the fellows and to hold the sessions.

So I stand by you, Siranush and my Armenian colleagues. You have my support, and thank you for being here.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:   Thank you, Leon. Thank you very much.

And I would like to give the floor to another product of the Fellowship Program, Lito Ibarra.

Lito, please.

LITO IBARRA:   Thank you, Siranush. And thank you, everyone, for being here. Like many have said, I do think and agree that this program, the Fellow Program and the NextGen Program, are very important, are a key aspect of what we do in ICANN.

You can see I -- I have gray hair. I have so many years on my shoulders, because I started with this whole thing of Internet in

El Salvador, my country, which is a small country in Latin America, in Central America to be more specific. I started in this adventure when I was about 36 years old. So this is to say that every one of us here in this session can do what he or she wants to do or his own country to promote the good use of Internet and taking advantage of this technology.

So in that sense, I attended my first ICANN meeting in 2001, but I became a fellow in 2008 and 2009. So from then on, I tried to get the resources for -- from whatever source I could to attend at least some of the ICANN meetings and get to know about this.

I have the honor, very special honor, of being the first fellow to become part of the ICANN Board. That was in 2015, at the end of 2015. And nowadays, I have been reappointed for the second time -- I mean the second year of the second term. And as some have said, this is possible for everyone. Everyone can work, can do whatever it takes to be part of the leadership team in any of the ICANN positions or somewhere else related to the Internet.

I will -- I will repeat the advice I always give to fellows and NextGen when we do these type of meetings that, by the way, I like also very much because of what Siranush has said, is that if we are in some way, modestly, a role model, I think we should deliver on that and we should try to transmit and to pass the baton to the next generation.

And so I -- my advice is do anything you can in your country, in your region, with your people, with your fellows at home to promote, to understand, to make good use, ethical use of Internet, and spread the word. Spread the connectivity, the good use of the Internet, wherever you go.

That means intersessions -- Being a fellow is not just attending ICANN meetings. It's not that at all. You have to remain active. You have to deliver. Every time you are in your country you have to create new ways of attracting people, engage more of your fellow citizens, and let them know about what is going on in the Internet ecosystem as a whole. So that is part of what I consider is the duty of the fellows and NextGen. We have to return something of what we have got via this opportunity to participate in these sessions and these meetings when it's possible to even travel to somewhere else, but we have to return that to the society, to the community in a way that could be profitable in the sense of such a profit -- profitness in our country and our regions.

So I will stop here with this. And like my fellows, the person that precede me, I'm open for questions.

Thank you very much.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:   Thank you very much, Lito.  And we are now open for comments and questions.  And I have first question from Clement, who is former NextGen and currently selected as a fellow, and we look forward to see him in face-to-face meeting as well.

So there is a question:  What are the means of action on the part of ICANN to prevent nepotism and the fact that the same people remain in the same positions?  We have seen so many actors play the musical chairs.

So the question probably to Göran, if you can take this question, Göran.

GÖRAN MARBY:   I told you, you always ask the hardest questions.  But I actually want to challenge the -- I mean, challenge the question a little bit.  Because I mean, for instance, on this -- on this call we have what people would actually call relative newcomers.  Like let's take Leon as an example.  You know, if he -- what is an old-timer?  Leon doesn't look at me very old.  I'm not very old in this one.

So I think it depends a little bit about when you come in in time, because one of the problems or one of the -- not a problem.  The way ICANN acts is that some of the working groups and some of the PDPs actually takes a lot of time, and you see people spending a long time.  Take the sub pro, for instance.  That has

been active for many, many years, and you see a lot of people have been doing that for a long time.

Yes, we see people who goes what you call musical chairs. I like that expression. And it's often because also they are an experts on something. They are subject-matter experts of it. But I see a big change. I've been in -- over the last week during this meeting, I have been in many new meetings with many new chairs, you know. Maybe they've been there for a year, maybe they've been there for two years, three years, but in ICANN history, that's not a very long time.

But if I reverse the question and sort of how do you get a leadership position at ICANN? And also phrase it, it's not ICANN org who makes the decision. They belong to the community and they belong to the different stakeholder groups within ICANN. They are the ones who chooses their leaders and their representation.

I learned that the best way is for you to raise your hand and say you're interested. There is an enormous need of people always who holds the pen. You are willing to work and make an effort. And I think people has many times -- many times sort of thinks that you shouldn't raise your hand, but there's a great (indiscernible) of people raising their hand and saying "I'm

interested."  So it can go fairly fast to be active on positions within the ICANN community.

And so I want to challenge the question a little bit saying it's -- you know, it might look so, but it's not always like that.  But the real important thing is that raise your hand.  There is always a need for you.

I hope that answered your question.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    Thank you, Göran.

There is a question from --

GÖRAN MARBY:    May I add one more thing?

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    Yes, please.

GÖRAN MARBY:    On reverse of that, I also think it's important for having people -- I mean, for me, it's a pleasure.  I've been around now for, what is it?  Close to four years, which is, in ICANN, a very short period of time.   And I speak to people who has been there since the

beginning. We actually have people coming to ICANN meetings who designed the whole thing from the first place, who was there when it happened. And to have that ability to tap into history is quite amazing, because history helps us to form the future.

So it's not always a bad thing.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    Thank you.

We have a question from Ananda Gautam who is a NextGen fellow and she's asking: As a NextGen fellow, we couldn't attend a physical ICANN event, missed the real opportunity to network with different people on the same plane. Would ICANN come with some plans to get us to some physical event in the future?

Who would like to take this?

GÖRAN MARBY:    I guess it's me again.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    Please, Göran.

GÖRAN MARBY:

Ananda, first of all, I haven't -- the last time I met the full community was back in Montreal last year. We closed down all our offices internally since March. And we are not planning to open them up at least to the end of this year, and we will see what happens next year.

The pandemic has had -- personally, and I think everybody, we really miss meeting each other. So then the question comes when can we come back to meetings again? It feels like many people around the world is -- are thinking about that question, not for ICANN but for their own countries. And as it happens right now, in many areas of the world, many different regions of the world, it seems to be going back again.

So -- So what we're doing right now, because we think -- as I think Maarten said before, is that -- or, sorry, Leon said that ICANN, what we do, me and the Board, is very much support the community and support the community when it comes to meetings.

So I wrote a blog last week. We're going out with a survey which are going to reach all the different stakeholder groups. So it's not only GNSO; it's also stakeholder's groups there. It's not only At-Large; it's also all the different parts of At-Large as well. And this survey is really to spark a conversation. Yes, there are

ICANN 69
COMMUNITY DAYS

questions, but they're really meant to have a discussion in your different stakeholder groups to answer that question.

It's hard to answer the question of when are we all going to go back to meetings because that's not in our hands.  But we need to have a conversation how do we -- how do we do it the best way?  Will there be hybrid meetings?  Regional meetings if it gets better in different parts of the world?  How do we get people to connect?

Because we really want to engage -- me and the Board really want to engage with this from your perspective to learn more.

We also want to make sure that in the surveys we try to take as much regional -- we want to know from a regional perspective because the world is big, and there are so many -- there's differences between the world.

So to answer your question, really, our job is to facilitate the discussion within the community about the meetings and the meeting strategy.  The unknown factor is when we can come back to them.  And I hear everything from, you know, six months to five years.

I don't know the answer.  That's why I'm reaching out to you to get more of those answers.

At the same time, we also, of course, work with medical experts who help to guide us. And just to -- When we canceled the meeting in Cancun this year, it was interesting because we were like two weeks ahead of everybody else because of the medical expertise we have who helps us. And for you who works around that, we sort of received a lot of criticism at that time because we canceled it. Two weeks later, more or less the whole world has closed down.

And it is -- I'm not saying we were more right than anyone else. I'm saying how deliberately working on how to make sure we don't do anything that could cause harm to either the community members or ICANN staff.

A long answer. And the basic is it's up to you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Göran.

And we have the question from Svitlana Tkachenko. And the question is: Now we don't have face-to-face meetings. No travels are not allowed. How has the lockdown changed the ICANN's priorities and the structure of the organization?

And I would expand this question also to the board members, how the lockdown changed ICANN priorities from Board perspective as well.

So probably first Göran, and then we'll go to Maarten.

GÖRAN MARBY: So I have the chairman of the Board here. He should start.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Maarten, please.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Gives you more time to think about, again, this excellent question. But it's true that with this is what we've looked at is what can we actually do, what is still possible because the intensity of meetings and the dragging over time has changed a little bit of how the approach is. So in a way, it has led to prioritization with us as well.

Really, within the whole system, it's focusing at overall ICANN's priorities. And with that, at the same time on a parallel track, we try to adapt our own way of working together as a Board to best possible support that, taking into account that we cannot meet face to face for the moment.

I think quite early on it was clear that it would take a while before this could happen again. And even for us, what Göran says, we were early in recognizing this. But still, it takes some time to change the mindset.

I think right now it's fully focusing on we're clear on what the priorities are, clear that we continue on improving on the way we deliver on our mission in line with the strategic plan as spoken.

So I think little things that we explicitly did that we have never done before is that we now have, for instance, Board social calls to also interact on the human level, which is an investment, in a way, to also make sure we can deliver better as a board on the major topics.

So it's little things we try to do to improve, and the focus is clearly on what is important for ICANN right now and what is up to us to deliver.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    Göran, any additions to this?

GÖRAN MARBY:    What have I done for staff? Maybe Siranush should answer that question for me if I've succeeded.

But, to be honest, I've been a manager for many, many years. Yes, I'm very old. And I never -- it's a new thing for me as well to manage an organization, 400 people, sitting in 35 countries around the world, with offices all around the world, and now we're all going to go remote in different time zones.

And so we early on started a conversation, first with the executive team, but also (indiscernible) board and the staff, how do we make sure that the staff feels that they are -- they are a part of something, as a part of the organization, that we care about them. And we've done a lot of things. We have information calls. We have -- weekly. We've -- you know, so everybody feels up to date with information. We let the teams share with each other how they're dealing with the COVID situation. And some of those stories have been -- brought you to tears, or bringing -- make me smile and laugh. Because as Leon said before, we have a lot of heroes in ICANN. We have people doing translations, sitting in wardrobes because they live in small apartments. We have people with children who are doing work at night when -- keeping very silent, because the rest of their family is sleeping, and just juggle, if you are two spouses who work and you have small kids and you're doing home schooling and still producing this fantastic quality of work for you, for me, and for everybody else. They are the real heroes.

And we try to build on that. So -- then we have -- during this time, we have had the need to reorganize. But that's not so much to do with the COVID situation itself, as much as it was time for us to evolve and do things differently.

When it comes to our interaction with the community, we took a step back and started to think about how do we -- one of the problems with what's happening is that we continue to support the community in their own what I would call bubbles. You know, we support the GNSO Council, we support the NCUC we support -- we support all of those. But we realize they never meet over the boundaries of their bubbles.

So we have Sally Costerton engaged much more to do regional events, regional information events, picking topics like what is happening with abuse, what is happening with security. And we continue to do them much more. Because that's also a way for the ICANN community to come together (indiscernible). And that's been very positive. And we're going to continue doing that.

Then I have to admit, to turn ICANN meetings into virtual meetings was -- it's something that we need to evolve and work with. So we do spend a lot of time -- we do spend a lot of time when it comes to making those meetings as we're now doing it

better and better and better. And I hope you see the evolvement of that, especially when it comes to translations.

So it's been really interesting, and a lot of trials and sometimes errors. But I'm blessed. I'm really blessed with having a team of people working together with me who make sure that I even look good when I do things. Not physically maybe, but you know what I mean.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Göran. And as a staff, I would say you really succeeded, because I myself personally feel very, very happy, I'm blessed to be part of this family.

And we have next question from Fezeu. Does ICANN could grant funding for actions inside the community initiate by a fellow to popularize the use of Internet.

Sorry.

So is there any funding for actions inside the community to be initiated by fellows?

GÖRAN MARBY: I guess that goes to me again.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    Please, Göran.

GÖRAN MARBY:    Thank you.

The answer is no, but also with a slight yes.

I mean, we do engage in local and regional events and sponsor them. We work together with our dear friends in ISOC. We work together with the RIRs. We do a lot of things together to do that. And underlying that is sort of the sponsoring of our inner belief that the world is a better place the more people who are connected to this interoperable Internet, as we call it.

So the direct answer is no. But, you know, we do things, together with other ones. And we really like to do it with other ones, because it gets a broader thing.

I hope that answered your question.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    Thank you, Göran.

And the next question, I guess --

LITO IBARRA:    Sorry, Siranush? Siranush?

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:      Yes, Lito, please.


LITO IBARRA:      May I add something to that?

As Göran has said, there is no specific program to support this. But I have been doing this -- and I want to tell you about it -- this even before I was a member of the ICANN board.

What I said before, try to be creative and organize events or conferences or whatever in your country, in your region. And you may do this, of course, as a voluntary work and ask your regional ICANN office, for instance, for support, for instance, for providing speakers or maybe helping with something else. A small amount, in case you get any money, but the support you get is very, very high quality. You can get technical speeches -- I mean, technical conferences or maybe related to what ICANN does, so that helps bring more people on board, ask more questions to the people -- to the persons in ICANN staff that are in the field, working with these issues. So that is very, very possible for anyone to ask for that support, maybe online, even if we were physical now, the support may be online or maybe there is a travel -- there is somebody traveling from ICANN.

So don't hesitate, and ask for that support to your regional ICANN office, in whatever part of the world you are.

Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Lito. A very good point to connect with the regional Global Stakeholder Engagement Team.

And if you don't know who is your regional team representative from ICANN, just send me an email and ask, and I will help with this.

And we will move forward to another question, asked by Raymond Mamattah. And I suppose this is to Maarten.

ICANN67 fellows missed Cancun for ICANN67, and we have been rescheduled for ICANN70, which is in Cancun again.

Are we going to miss Cancun for the second time?

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Yeah, that's a question to all of us, I guess. We would all love to be there. And right now, there's no decision about it. And we will make sure we are very well oriented before we take a decision. And we'll do it sooner rather than later.

And personally, I think it doesn't look good. The Mexican -- Mexico is in trouble with -- also they're dealing with COVID, as Leon could even can confirm much better than I do.

So, yes, we are really looking forward to being able to meet in person again. And right now, I cannot count on Cancun for sure. So I'm sorry I have to disappoint you for that moment. And we will make sure we take the decision sooner rather than later. And we will make sure you are very well informed and explain to you whatever the decision is, why we came to that decision.

LEON SANCHEZ: Siranush, I have something.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Yes, please, Leon.

LEON SANCHEZ: So I definitely look forward to welcoming everyone in Cancun. As you might be aware or you may not be aware, I am from Mexico. I live in Mexico.

And, yes, as Maarten has said, currently, the pandemic in Mexico is hitting very hard. The numbers are not going down in terms of -- of contagiousness. And, well, the government is having trouble in controlling the pandemic here in Mexico.

So as Maarten said, I think it is likely that we will not be able to come to Cancun. We haven't made that decision. Of course, as

Maarten was saying, we would rather take that decision sooner rather than later.  But for the time being, I can tell you that the panorama is not encouraging.  It is a difficult time pretty much in every -- in every region of the world.  But speaking locally, I don't see how the Mexican authorities will be able to control the pandemic in time for us to hold our meeting in Cancun.

So that's how things stand.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    Thank you, Leon.

GÖRAN MARBY:    May I add something to this?  Because it sometimes becomes a little bit sort of -- we talk about statistics and stuff.

I mean, for me, this is actually about lives.  We talk about a virus and a pandemic that actually causes people to die.

And I probably -- I mean, I -- my way of looking at this, I'm going to be very cautious.  And I know the board is very cautious as well.  We want to make sure that whenever we return to meetings, we can do that in a safe way for as many as possible.  Because I don't want to risk anyone's life.  And that's how serious it is.  And that's how we deal with it.  And that's how we think about it.  It's not only about staff, it's not only about me,

it's about you and your relatives and your -- because I would literally hate to have a meeting too early and someone actually gets sick out of that or spread the virus to their families.

So we are cautious. And we're going to continue to be cautious about this as well and pray that it will go away at some point and we're going to be ready.

There is another aspect to this that I want to bring into it, it's that ICANN is also about having the ability so people can meet on an equal footing. So while we talk about hybrids or when we're talking about going back to the full meetings, we want to make sure that we don't exclude parts of the world.

Let's say that Europe suddenly wakes up one day and says, "It's all gone and there's no problem there," and we can have an ICANN meeting in Europe, but we can't have people from Latin America there, because Latin America is in worse shape or behind or before or whatever it is. And should we then have a meeting where we can only have Europeans coming into the meeting and we exclude people from Latin America who can't participate on an equal footing?

The equal footing is important for us as well. So we are going to continue to deliver on this.

And now it's time to really listen to the community through the survey we're doing.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    Thank you, Göran.

We have a question from Jaewon Son, who would like -- I would appreciate any career advice to NextGen or fellows who might be interested in working for ICANN in the future while not being in the similar sector at the moment.  What would be the initial step to make the first move?

Who would like to take --

GÖRAN MARBY:    Thank you.  I wonder sometimes who is -- I should probably say -- who is in the sector of ICANN?

If I actually look on the staff we have, we come from so many different places, both regionally, country -- we speak 55 languages in ICANN.  And we have anymore trade that you can imagine.  Because Internet, as we -- Internet on the other side consists of users that come from all over the world and have different backgrounds.

So there is a way. We post all our openings. And there are positions open. And the best way is to apply.

We are not hiring a lot of people all the time, but we have, I think, fairly interesting positions open right now. They might be in different parts of the world, and they're contained in different parts of the offices.

Apply. It's a very good career, a career -- sort of -- it's not more magical than that.

You can ask Siranush. That's how she did it.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: And I just wanted to add that we have 14 ICANN staff members who came from the fellowship program right now in different regions. So if there is any particular question or suggestion or advice, you can just contact us, and we would be happy to help.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Can I add to this, Siranush?

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Yes, Maarten. Of course.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Most importantly, it's if you're passionate about the Internet and about helping to make it work.

You can already start today also in your country, in your region, because there's a lot of things going on, either by ICANN or by other Internet-related organizations. And it's easy to engage now even, in a way, more, because many of these are also virtual. So get yourself up to speed and find your way.

As Göran said, all of these organizations are on a constant lookout for new talent, for new people who have the heart. And it starts, really, by becoming addicted to it, by really seeing where you can make a difference and finding your way.

So the fact that you're here is already a great first step.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Maarten.

There was a question from Bonface Witaba. Why was the ICANN remote hub program discontinued, yet it was helping to bring new members into the ICANN ecosystem? Through this program, I personally brought on board two universities from two different countries, 200-plus people, some of whom became ICANN fellows and/or are now volunteers in a number of ICANN constituencies.

Who would like to take this?

Göran probably.

GÖRAN MARBY:                      Oh, I'm so surprised!

First of all, funny enough, I received a question this morning why we closed down the hubs.

I mean -- so we changed the names.  We call them regional offices, and gave the regional offices more authority over the regions as sort of making sure that not everything is sort of -- is looked through the lens of a North American, West Coast, L.A. office.  And we worked very hard setting up regional office managers.  Everybody who is working for ICANN is attached to a regional office, et cetera, et cetera.

When it comes to different programs, I think it's fair to say we adopt the role of different programs all the time.  We try different things, we try to put them into perspective, we try to see where we can get the best bang for the buck.  And it's a constant evolution of everything we do.  And we will try new programs and cancel old programs.  We're not closing down this one.  But always we're changing them.

But when it comes to the regionals, depending on which region you belong to, you should have a conversation with the regional office.

Which -- do you know, Siranush, which part of the world this question came from?

You were muted when you said something.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    Yes.  It's from Kenya.

GÖRAN MARBY:    So the regional office there happens to be the Istanbul office, where we now have a new regional manager, Baher. (indiscernible) make my life so easy.  Why don't you talk to him.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    Thank you, Göran.

And we will go to the next question, by --

SALLY COSTERTON:    Siranush, it's Sally.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:     Yes, Sally, please.

GÖRAN MARBY:     Oh, even better.  I didn't know you were on the call, Sally.  So welcome.

SALLY COSTERTON:     I've been here all the time.  Hello.

Yeah, Nick, do you want to just very quickly also follow up on the specific?  I think this might also not be just be related to the hub offices, although might have been, but also the hubs that we used to run at ICANN meetings.

NICK TOMASSO:     Yes, Sally.  Thank you.

And thank you, Göran, for the opportunity.

We did run remote hubs during prior ICANN meetings.  But they proved to be somewhat problematic, mostly due to Internet bandwidth restrictions from the hubs.  They were also taken up less and less the option.  So at one point in time, we abandoned them.

That said, we'll think about them again, with the new technology that we have available to us now.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    Thank you.

Thank you, Sally, and thank you, Nick.

We'll go to -- we have time for two more questions. So, unfortunately, we will not be able to cover all the questions. And I see many of them in the chat space.

But I'm just going by the time it was posted.

So the next question, from Gazi Kabir from Bangladesh.

For many years, ICANN has been doing amazing jobs to keep the Internet unique and one through the active participation of part-timer community members and full-timers from ICANN. Don't you think some more full-time community members model of engagement in the system could make some more impact on the Internet ecosystem?

LEON SANCHEZ:  Sorry. I wonder what that model could be, Siranush? I think it's a good opportunity to listen to ideas.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:     Gazi, if you have something, we can unmute you and -- you can unmute you and add to your question, if you would like to.

GAZI KABIR:     Can you hear me, Siranush?  This is Kabir from --

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:     Yes, we can hear you.  Please go ahead.

GAZI KABIR:     All right.  The area is the part-timers are mostly volunteers and mostly engaged with their day-to-day jobs and, you know, day-to-day whereabouts about their own parameters.

So sometimes engagement -- I'm attending many, many meetings these days.  And I found some of them are attending, but with less concentration sometimes.  But I found they are doing the right thing, good job.

I thought that if there is a model can come out with volunteers who can be engaged voluntarily or with any other model of engagement to which they can give more concentration to specific matters that are being discussed and decided over a period of time in the ICANN ecosystem.

That was my asking.

LEON SANCHEZ:     Thanks.  Well, I guess engagement has to do, at least in my experience and in my vision, with how committed we are to making a better Internet.  And the time that we are able to devote to the ecosystem and the work that we do in ICANN of course will depend on many factors.  And I can tell you that, at least in my view and in my experience, the most valuable or the two most valuable things that have made me engage in a voluntary basis was to learn, to know that I was contributing to something that was meaningful globally speaking, and to get to know new people.  To get to engage with very diverse, very knowledgeable community around the world, and that kept me going.

I do have a day job, but I can tell you that currently, and even before joining the Board, I was devoting more hours to my volunteer work within ICANN than I did to my day job.  The good thing is that on my day job, I am my boss, and so I don't have to ask for permission, and I know that may vary from person to person.

But I think -- I think, again, engagement will, at least as volunteer time relates, it will come from your own passion and your own willing-to-ness to contribute to build a better Internet.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:     Thank you, Leon.

And we'll go to probably the last question. And I see in the chat space many questions have been responded by my colleagues, so thank you for taking those questions.

And there is a question from Natalie Rose: Do you think there will be a blended mode of virtual and face-to-face meetings when the pandemic is over?

Göran, probably you can start.

GÖRAN MARBY:     If I can speak not as the ICANN CEO but more like Göran, because I don't know the answer to it so I'm really speculating. I think that we need to figure out a way of doing some sort of what people call hybrids where -- but, you know, where -- it really depends on how we want to do meetings. There has been suggestions that maybe we should go away during the pandemic from this concept of a meeting. That we, you know -- we're up to three weeks now with during the Annual General Meeting with all the sessions. Some have suggested that maybe we can do that over a longer period of time. And that flexibility might create us to do more, in the beginning, regional ones where we can bring together people in the region and then do certain things and then move on that into somewhere else. Because the

**ICANN 69**
COMMUNITY DAYS

time zone issue is an issue. I mean, I started my work today 2:30 in the morning, and I'm going to carry on for a couple of hours now. And I'm lucky, in a way. I'm paid for doing this. Many of you are volunteers.

So it's really the time to be innovative about this, because one of the things we shouldn't forget is that this system that you've been a part of, of building what we call the Internet has actually been working quite well during this very strange time. And so many people are dependent on this structure and this work. And ICANN has an important role in the world of the Internet.

We make this difference between the platforms on the Internet and the Internet itself. The social media platforms is not the Internet. When you walk into a social media platform, you're in someone else's computer. But this underlying interoperability thing that you can take any device anywhere in the world and connect and make connection to other people is what we're here for. It has proven remarkably well to do that. But it is based also that people comes together.

The ICANN model is -- we use a lot of strange word. It's really about people comes together, sit in a room, sometimes a very large room, to define a problem and together say, "Hey guys, this is a good solution," go home and implement it. That's really consensus.

So I think that we probably, in the meantime, before we can go back to the full ICANN meeting, I personally think that we're going to figure out hybrids or smaller meetings that we build on going forward. We need to meet each other.

You can use trust on the Internet. You can use trust on the Zoom call. I saw someone wrote Zoom fatigue. Yes. I feel that. But it's also that you can't -- it's hard to gain trust on the Internet.

You need to see people, talk to them, hold their hands, give them a hug. Do you remember that time when you could actually hug people? I'm Swedish. I don't like it but, I heard that other people like it.

We need to get back.

Thank you.


SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    Thank you, Göran.

And, Maarten, if you say -- you have anything to add. And please also have the final word, just a call for action, probably, for fellows, NextGen, newcomers with that.

| MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: | First, it's a very good question, and I agree with everything Göran said. |
|---|---|

It's also clear we never had only physical meetings. There was always already participation from a distance possible.

I think what we will see is that this period when we were forced to work in these virtual ways, there's also advantages to that, like people who are too busy to travel to ICANN meetings may be able to come in for that one session. And maybe we can find a better balance between those people who contribute online and those who are in the room. Next, too, very much agreeing that, in general, those rooms, I'm looking forward to be in those again.

So with that, and also very much welcoming you. Very good that you are here.

And I know it's a different experience than if you would have been on location in Hamburg. I can assure you that we all feel like that.

But the content and the passion for what we make work together hasn't changed.

So I wish you a very, very good week, and you're in very good hands with Siranush and the team.

And please know, okay, you won't see us in the corridors, but you'll find us on social media. You'll find us during the fika sessions. And of course the Board is willing to answer any questions during the Public Forum on the 22nd, on the very last day.

So I wish you an excellent time, and I hope to hear much more about you not only in the week to come but also in the months and the years to come.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    Thank you, Maarten.

Last ten seconds for Leon?

LEON SANCHEZ:    Thank you very much, Siranush. As I said in the chat, once a fellow always a fellow. The fellows rock ICANN and rock the world. So just make room for us. We're coming. We're coming in.

So feel free to reach me anytime. Siranush has my contact details. I'm just a click away from any one of you, and happy to continue to have this conversation.

Thank you all. Thank you, Siranush.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:     Thank you, Leon.

And Lito, please.

LITO IBARRA:     I agree, fellows rock and we always rock.

So I invite you all to keep engaged and reach whatever your objectives are. So see you. And thank you. Thank you very much.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:     Thank you. And just to add that not only fellows rock but also NextGen-ers rock.

So, Göran, last ten seconds for you?

GÖRAN MARBY:     What can I say? Thank you for inviting me. This is one of my favorite events during any ICANN meeting. Thank you for the really good questions. Sorry if we didn't take them all. And also thanks to you, Siranush and my staff, which is supporting this. You are also heroes. And as everybody else said. Keep us busy.

Thank you, my friends.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:    With that, thank you very much, and thank you -- thanks, everyone, for participating.

I would like to also thank our interpreters.  And thanks our presenters for the great lively session.

With that, our meeting is adjourned.

Thank you very much.

**[ END OF TRANSCRIPT ]**