

BARCELONA – HLG: Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Monday, October 22, 2018 – 10:15 to 10:45 CEST

ICANN63 | Barcelona, Spain

BRAD WHITE:

Ladies and gentlemen, if you can please take your seats, we'll get started in just a few minutes.

Ladies and gentlemen, if you can please make your way to your seats, we'll begin in one minute. Thank you.

As most of you well know, the high-level governmental meetings take place every two years in conjunction with an ICANN public meeting and in addition to the Governmental Advisory Committee meetings or the GAC meetings.

It's an understatement to say that your discussions here today are important. You're about to deliberate the technical, legal, and geopolitical challenges that ICANN faces as it works to fulfill its mission in an always expanding and overarching changing Internet ecosystem.

The sessions are designed to be interactive and will facilitate the opportunity for ministers and high-level officials to make interventions in the course of the day.

So, with that brief introduction, I would now like to introduce Spain's Secretary of State for Digital Advancement, Mr. Francisco Polo.

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.

FRANCISCO POLO:

Good morning. Buenos Dias. It's an honor for me and my country to welcome you all to this opening session of the 4th high-level governmental meeting. This is a forum that gathers delegations from more than 90 countries as well as intergovernmental organizations from all over the world in the framework of the 63 ICANN annual general meeting.

For Spain, as the host country, the celebration of the high-level governmental meeting is of the utmost importance.

I welcome you to Spain, a Spain that is an open country that is not afraid of the challenges of the future, that wants to be key for discussions that will make our world a better place.

This is a country that some will tell you want to lead the key aspects of digitization. We want to be a point of meeting, a country that looks to the future with optimism.

We Spaniards, as I have said in the welcome and opening ceremony, we kiss each other. We hug each other. So we're going to embrace you all to this important meeting.

When created in 2012, this high-level governmental meeting has been discussing the governance the Internet.

Governments are key players in this field, because the responsibility of the state is to be there where the private initiative is not there. Or where we need a view in the long term. Or, as in this case, we urgently need to secure the rights of the people.

Digitization will not solve all of the challenges we are facing in our societies. Some problems are getting bigger. So all of us here today have a responsibility. Our responsibility is expanded as well as the new digital economy is expanding. And we do not have any time to waste, because digitization is like a swirl. And a swirl or a hurricane may generate new social divides. But it may also shake our consciousness and change things, replace them for new ones to secure that a talented person, regardless his level of income or the place where he or she lives will have access to the Internet for better education.

When we're talking about Internet governance, we're talk about how to manage the critical resources of the Internet. And I mean IP addresses, domain names, like dot ES, dot com, or the protocols of communications. When we talk about Internet governance, we are talking about how to secure the fundamental rights of people.

It is to talk about the right to privacy and to the protection of private data. When we talk about Internet governance, we are talking about freedom of speech, of human rights, of intellectual property. It is also to talk about the difficulties in the fight to spam, cybercrime. To talk about Internet governance is to talk about the promotion of different cultures and languages in the Internet to decrease the cost of the access to Internet in developing countries and to maintain the completeness, interoperability, and security of the network. And within all these rights, in our opinion, the governments of all the world need to face the challenge. Because the governments must secure the access to the Internet but also to maintain the fundamental rights of citizens.

I now repeat: We governments are responsible for securing the fundamental rights of people.

A few minutes ago, in the opening ceremony of ICANN, we talked about the benefits and the opportunities of a world that is connected through the Internet and how it may contribute to the 21st Century. But this interconnectivity and the uses of it opens the door for crimes, inequalities, and some other things. The balance will depend on how we governments may generate a proper regulation for this new environment. A digital world needs rules that the final objective shall be to secure the rights of our people. In Spain we are working to regulate the protection of personal data, privacy, the reuse of public information, the security of the network and information systems in European Union, the free circulation of data that is non-personal data, and transparency for companies when they use online brokerage services.

In sum, we governments cannot be just observers in the Internet governance. We need public policies within the ecosystem so as to generate the proper framework for the governance that will lead to innovation. We also need public policies so as to reduce inequalities and to develop the talent of women to facilitate investment and so that startups may grow.

In Spain, as I said before, these policies have a name. And it's the Strategy Spain and Entrepreneur Nation. This strategy has been promoted via the president; and this will generate a mainstream impact, something that is needed in our economy.

The major objective of this plan is that Spain may become the future entrepreneur nation. We want to promote digitization that will generate more companies, more growth and more shared growth so that that growth will be a robust one. We don't want to leave anyone behind.

I said it before and I'll repeat it now: for the government of Spain to be successful, it would mean that we would have created a more cohesive society.

And, to conclude, I would like to congratulate ICANN for the organization of this meeting. Because the full session that are part of this high-level governmental meeting will deal with several of the concerns of most of governments with respect to digitization. All countries represented in this room have in our hands the possibility of building a more resilient and strong economy that may suddenly overcome economic crises and uncertainties. So, please, seize the opportunity. Do not look back in 10 years and wish to have done things in a different way.

So let's hope for a better world, a more (indiscernible) world. We may start today in ICANN 63 in this high-level meeting.

Your work will be very fruitful, and wish for a happy stay in Spain and in Barcelona. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: It's my pleasure to introduce ICANN's President and CEO, Goran Marby.

GORAN MARBY: Thank you, and good morning. Welcome, everybody, to ICANN's fourth high-level government meeting. It happens to be my second one. I note that many of you traveled quite a distance and during what I'm sure is a very busy time to join us in what I expect to be a very productive meeting.

I want to extend my thanks to the government of Spain for putting this together and hosting this meeting. I also wish to thank the Secretary of State, Francisco Polo; the International Telecommunications Union Secretary, Houlin Zhao; The Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy at the African Union Commission, Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid; and the chair of the Governmental Advisory Committee, Manal Ismail, my good friend who is sitting here today. I'm also looking forward to seeing all of you here and seeing the meaningful discussions that will come out of the agenda.

The purpose of this meeting is to come together to reaffirm the important role of governments in ICANN, which is stated in our bylaws. The government has very important role in ICANN.

The previous meeting was held in Marrakech during our 55th public meeting and just six months before the historic IANA stewardship transition. And that was only two years ago, but it was a markedly different time.

As our world evolves and changes, we are here to make sure that our unique identifier systems continues to function as intended. Whether it is in intense discussions about the implications of the European Union's general data protection regulation on the future WHOIS system or any other systems within the Internet ecosystem, our community will find the best path going forward.

You have provided us with valuable input, and I appreciate all of your contributions.

At the same time, ICANN org has also come a long way. We continue to find new ways to enhance and improve our transparency and accountability, especially as it relates to development of our budget and strategic plan. As the CEO, it's ultimately my responsibility to ensure that the org is staying true to its mission and acting in the best of interests both of the community and the DNS.

I'm confident in the work we've done to uphold that.

ICANN does not exist in a bubble.

It's only one piece of a larger puzzle that is the Internet governance system. IETF, the RIRs, ISOC, and the country code operators are equally important.

While our mission is clear, we are seeking to expand our mandate or purpose. It is important that we never lose what is happening around us. Much like GDPR, new well-intended legislative initiatives regarding data protection and privacy are being developed all over the world, each with their own implications for ICANN's missions. I hope we can

continue to work together to ensure that we preserve the Internet as a single interconnected resource that benefits everyone avoiding fragmentation of the DNS that can result from patchwork or conflicting national laws and regulations. In practice that means, if there's an effect on DNS, your people in your countries cannot connect to the Internet and travel everywhere on this fantastic resource we call the Internet.

This is a critical opportunity to discuss how new technologies and business practices may impact the operation of the DNS, the user interface to the Internet and, in turn, ICANN.

As a nerd at heart, I'm always fascinated by the evolution of technology. But, as the CEO, I want to know what this evolution might mean for the future of ICANN and its remit within the Internet ecosystem. We also come together at a time of historical importance, with this month being ICANN's 20th anniversary. This is an opportunity to take a moment not only to reflect on what has been achieved since October 1998 but to look ahead to what's going to come next.

20 years is a very short period of time. But, if you look back 20 years and see how we changed society together by connecting people in one interconnected network, you might see some differences. When I explain to my children that when I was 35 years old there was no Internet, really, they always say that I'm really, really old.

The technical, business, and political environments will continue to evolve but will remain as our commitment to working together in the

benefit of all Internet users and provide a service to the world, because that's what ICANN is all about. We provide a service to the world.

Once again, I would like to thank all the various governments and intergovernmental organizations who are joining us today. I express my appreciation to the ministers, vice ministers, regulators, and the head of agencies and delegations that are here. Your continued support for not only for ICANN, for the multistakeholder model that acts as the foundation of our community is incredibly appreciated. I look forward to the days ahead and for the opportunity to meet all of you. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

BRAD WHITE:

Thank you, Goran. As Goran just mentioned, the high-level government meeting two years ago was in Marrakech, Morocco. It's my honor to now introduce the host of that meeting, the general director of Morocco's National Telecommunications Regulatory Agency, Mr. Hassibi, who is speaking here today on behalf of Mr. Moulay Hafid Elalamy. Mr. Hassibi.

MR. AZ-EL-ARABE HASSIBI:

I will speak in French. Mr. Ministers, Mr. Secretary of State, Mr. Francisco Polo, Mr. President of ICANN, Mrs. President of the GAC, it is pleasure to be with you today for the inauguration of this intergovernmental level high-level meeting. I would like to first thank the president of this

meeting. I would like to thank the Spanish government for welcoming us today.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it was a great honor for Morocco to host the third high-level government meeting that occurred in Morocco, in Marrakech. That meeting is a great platform to debate on the different challenges that concern the Internet governance. During our third meeting that occurred in the kingdom of Morocco in 2016, participants sustained the solution for the process of negotiations to develop a transition process on the Internet steward transition and to strengthen the accountability of ICANN. The participants decided to preserve the legitimate interests of government and guarantee a common management of resources. The three previous high-level government meetings of the GAC confirmed that the multistakeholder model should continue. It is defended by the ICANN community. The great debate on the IANA transition is not over. But it does not mean that the work is completely done and that everything is completed. It is important to continue to preserve the work that was done by the multistakeholder model of ICANN. Within this model we need to continue to develop the DNS ecosystem, especially in underdeveloped country and especially in Africa. The financial investment needs to be higher. There is a barrier, an obstacle for some of these countries. It is an obstacle for smaller companies and industries. The attribution of DNS and, of course, ICANN that recognizes diversity within the multistakeholder model. But I would like to call out to the entire committee to find solutions for these crucial questions in order to ensure a better durability of the ICANN model.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the GAC is a platform, a multistakeholder platform. It was created in 1999. And it has contributed to the multistakeholder model. GAC has more members, currently 177 governments, 27 new members since the meeting in Marrakech, and let us also not forget all the observers of the international community. The ICANN community contributes as a resource that has no borders, no vertical border. We are part of the ecosystem. Our role within ICANN is essential. Without that role, there wouldn't be a multistakeholder model.

The Morocco kingdom shares the concerns of representatives at the GAC. We need to make sure that all our contributions are taken into account to develop Internet governance. We are convinced that those meetings are important in order to reinforce a better understanding of ICANN and of the diverse public political questions linked to the strategic role of these organizations. The organizations at the level of the GAC on the political question of the gTLDs reinforcements of the multistakeholder model of ICANN, conformity of ICANN with the legally challenges and the protection of users as well as common good and other processes linked to the management of the resources of the Internet are all important questions. And the goal is to strengthen security and stability of the system. It is one of the essential keys of the future and of social integration of several nations.

Morocco is happy to note that there are great progress that was made within GAC. I am convinced that the GAC has the ability to sustain its commitment to all of the ICANN system. I would like to encourage the

GAC to continue working towards that goal in the future. I would like to ask the governments to continue to work towards that goal.

I would like to thank Mr. Goran for his work within ICANN, for his work and that of his team. I would like to welcome you to the next meeting in Marrakech in June 2019. Thank you very much, Ladies and Gentlemen.

[Applause]

BRAD WHITE: Thank you Mr. Hassibi. And now I'd like to introduce the chair of the GAC, the Governmental Advisory Committee, Manal Ismail.

MANAL ISMAIL: Thank you, Brad. Good morning, everyone. Mr. Francisco Polo, Secretary of State for Digital Advancement, Spanish Ministry of Economy and Business, Mr. Goran Marby, President and CEO of ICANN, Mr. Az-El-Arabe Hassibi, Director General of the National Telecommunication Regulatory Agency of Morocco, honorable ministers, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it's my pleasure to welcome you all today to the fourth edition of the high-level governmental meeting held along the occasion of ICANN63 with generous hosting from the Spanish government.

The meeting coincides with the 20th anniversary of ICANN and it's organized by the Governmental Advisory Committee, the GAC, ICANN, and the Spanish government. The high-level governmental meeting is

an outcome of ICANN's accountability and transparency reviews which have recommended the engagement of senior government officials on public policy issues on a regular and collective basis. Hence the idea of this high-level government meeting held once every two years.

As you may know, the first high-level meeting was held in Toronto in 2012, followed by two meetings, London in 2014 and Marrakech, as we have already heard, in 2016.

Today, the fourth meeting here in Barcelona reconvenes with the overall objective of reinforcing the critical role of governments in ICANN. It also provides an opportunity to discuss pressing public policy issues at senior level among governments as well as between governments and ICANN executives. The meeting further serves as an occasion for governments to learn more about ICANN and its community as well as for ICANN to learn more about governments, their agendas, views and concerns.

Accordingly, high-level governmental meetings are of special importance to the GAC as they play a fundamental role. One, in bringing the work of the GAC to the attention of senior officials within member countries and territories, and two, in reaching out to governments who are not currently represented on the GAC. Therefore, it is very encouraging to know that we have already hit 120 delegations and intergovernmental organizations attending the meeting here today. So we may be setting new records here in Barcelona.

Clearly this demonstrates both importance of ICANN's work to government as well as importance of governments' participation in

ICANN. Ladies and Gentlemen, 20 years ago in September 1998 ICANN was established. A few months later, as early as ICANN1 in Singapore on March 1999, the GAC was formed as an advisory committee to ICANN, introducing the role of governments in ICANN's multistakeholder model. Ever since, the GAC has been representing the voice of governments and intergovernmental organizations in ICANN's multistakeholder structure. It provides a venue where governments represent and advance their collective views and work together to provide consensus advice to ICANN board. As you may know, GAC provides advice to ICANN board on issues of public policy pertaining to ICANN's mandate, especially where there may be interaction between ICANN's activities or policies and national laws or international agreements.

Looking back over the past 20 years, many of us feel proud to have witnessed the GAC under the leadership of previous chairs from Australia, Malaysia, Latvia, Canada, and Switzerland grow from only 24 members and 7 observers at its very first meeting to 178 members and 36 observers as we speak today. Such growth would not have been possible if it has not been empowered by inclusion, transparency, openness, and cross-community collaboration. Personally, I have been participating to the GAC since its early days in different capacities, representing my own country, serving as one of its vice chairs, and now as the chairperson, and I have to say, it has been an amazing experience to be part of its substantial evolution over the years. Moving from completely closed meetings to fully open meetings and changing from meetings run only in English to meetings with real time interpretation

in all six U.N. languages plus Portuguese, recorded, transcribed, and open to remote participation. Also through its current work modalities, the GAC is keen to work collaboratively with other constituencies bilaterally or through cross-community efforts contributing to ICANN's policy development process.

Ladies and Gentlemen, throughout this 20-year evolution journey, the GAC has been an integral part of ICANN's bottom-up multistakeholder consensus-based policy development process. It has taken part in several ICANN milestones, including the introduction of internationalized domain names, the introduction of new generic top-level domains, the transition of the IANA stewardship role from the U.S. government to the global multistakeholder community, and the formation of the empowered community where the GAC is one of its decisional participants retaining all powers granted to the community post the transition.

The GAC works very hard to keep pace with the fast-moving Internet dynamics and to reach consensus on public policy issues, despite the different national priorities and diverse interests of its members and observers. Reaching consensus may be challenging and time-consuming, but ultimately it gives significant weight to GAC advice and mandates ICANN board to duly take it into consideration.

The GAC continues to be crucial to the future of ICANN, along with other parts of the community, from private sector, civil society, academia, and technical experts, all of which I believe should benefit from the unique nature of ICANN and while respecting the diverse interests and

different working methods, collaborate to prioritize public policy issues across the organization, work on a common agenda, and engage in the policy development process targeting consensus.

Clearly collaborative work faces many challenges, but it is all about hitting the right balances. How to satisfy the interests of the different stakeholder groups, how to respect national laws while following global standards, how to satisfy the need for data protection and privacy while fulfilling the requirements for combating cybercrime, how to ensure inclusion and seek consensus while remaining effective and efficient, and finally, how to secure safety and security of and on the Internet while maintaining its openness and nature as a platform for innovation.

Distinguished delegates, colleagues, we have developed over the decades. But the Internet, as we know it today, is relatively young and has grown over a short period of time.

It's only by the year 2000 that the Internet started to be used for getting news, sharing information, for social communication and entertainment. With these wide views, the Internet started attracting the attention of politicians and regulators around the world to its increasing significance and importance, particularly as it emerged to be part of the nation's critical infrastructure in just a decade.

Accordingly, political forces started shaping the future of the Internet, moving the global dialogue from technical problems to public policy issues and from technical administration to Internet governance, which is now a priority on national agendas. Moreover, with governments

shifting towards installing new laws to regulate the digital ecosystem within their borders, the need to develop harmonized national and global governance structures of this global infrastructure is becoming more pressing.

During our meeting today discussions will tackle, from an ICANN perspective, the critical role of governments post-IANA transition, thematic challenges in the Internet governance ecosystem -- regional and national legislations are having on the borderless governance structure of the Internet, impact of the Internet technological evolution on ICANN, and finally a dialogue on global digital agenda and Internet policies.

So, ladies and gentlemen, we've got a busy agenda ahead of us today at the end of which the host country will be compiling a chairman's report capturing the main points discussed throughout the day.

As I conclude, allow me on my own behalf, on behalf of GAC vice chairs from Brazil, China, France, Niue, and Senegal and behalf of the whole GAC membership, allow me to wish you all fruitful discussions, productive deliberations and yet another successful high-level governmental meeting. Thank you.

[Applause]

BRAD WHITE:

Thank you, Manal.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]