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YESIM NAZLAR:

Good morning, good afternoon, good evening to everyone. Welcome to At-Large intercultural virtual workshop on the topic, “The Art of Small Talk” taking place on Monday the 29th of November 2021 at 13:00 UTC.

We will not be doing a roll call as it’s a webinar, however, we will be noting attendance on the Wiki page. And if I could please remind all participants on the phone bridge as well as computers to please mute your lines when not speaking to prevent any background noise, and also to please state your name when taking the floor, not only for transcription purposes but also to allow accurate interpretation. We have English, Spanish and French interpretation.

Thank you all for joining. Now I would like to leave the floor to Sandra Hoferichter, chair of the ICANN Academy Working Group. Over to you, Sandra. Thank you very much.

SANDRA HOFERICHTER:

Thank you very much, Yesim. I would like to welcome everyone to our webinar or workshop. I hope this will be a fun workshop, and I would encourage everyone already to switch on the camera, because in these times of social distancing, doing a workshop on intercultural training, it would be more appealing if we can at least all see each other. That would provide us with a little bit more interaction, I hope, at least.

I can maybe just say a little bit how we came to that idea to organize such a workshop. It was basically the Capacity Building Working Group that had the idea to do something on intercultural training, and we

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*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.*

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were prepared to organize this already in September, but then time flew and with everyone being so busy with phone calls, we said, okay, let's do it after the ICANN meeting which was unfortunately another virtual meeting.

However, I think sooner or later, we will be back to normal. I feel sometimes that I'm losing my English words because, okay, I'm writing in English, I'm participating in phone calls in English, but what I'm missing is the personal exchange with everyone. In this respect, I do not only miss my almost fluent English but also this sort of creativity that you get when you talk to each other. Unintended side effects and the little chitchat.

As I'm losing my fluent English, I have the feeling we are also losing a little bit the ability to communicate with each other in a very informal way. We all know these situations when we meet at ICANN meetings where you are in the need or at least someone is approaching you to have a small talk with you. It's literally small talk. And since we did already with the ICANN Academy Working Group an intercultural training back in Abu Dhabi, we were looking for an opportunity to continue with such a workshop or with such a program without investing too much of the resources.

Since this ICANN community is so rich of intercultural influences, I think we can organize such a session without any resources just by listening to each other. The picture that I'm sharing here is basically a very good situation, possibly the ICANNers are pretty much aware of different cultures, but these kinds of things happen. You don't know how to say hello. Do we get a kiss, do we shake hands, do we bow, or what to do?

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Possibly, after this pandemic or with our next meeting when the pandemic might be still going on, we might not kiss anymore, and might remember that kissing at ICANN was a big thing the first day or the first few days, we were always busy with hugging and kissing. I think this is something we might not do in the future anymore.

Anyway, we have to and we would like to communicate with each other. And therefore, I would invite everyone here to see this workshop as a refresher of your social skills after a long time of social distancing, but also by getting an understanding for different behaviors, because even without the pandemic, we already knew that small talk has a different meaning in different cultures and for different individuals. There are extrovert people that can do this easy-going small talk and then there are introvert people that are not really comfortable with this kind of conversation. And then there are of course also people who don't like small talk at all and say "I give a damn on what you're doing here, please leave me alone." And we also have to deal with those people.

After this session, I don't think we can come up with some recommendations here, but since this is a pilot, we might consider having a subsequent session where we come up with some easy recommendations without generalizing too much, and of course, we would like to have a lot of fun in this session.

And I summarized here some of the typical ICANN situations where small talk is needed. That's for instance when you take a seat before a session starts and you have a neighbor and you just want to be polite, or maybe in the break, you're discussing what has been discussed in the

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session and these kind of things, but also when queueing or waiting for a bus driving you to social, there's also the situation but also in the bus or when you share a taxi, or when you travel to the ICANN meeting or going back, you meet ICANNers at the airport and also there you are sometimes in the situation that some small talk might be a good idea to socialize with each other. And of course, any situation before and after the session also, if you would like to approach someone. If you say, "I just heard something from this person that I would find out a little bit more, but how am I doing it? How do I approach this person which I don't know yet?"

So what we did, we invited from all At-Large regions a representative who could give us some answers along the lines of these questions that I posted here. For instance, what are the dos and don'ts of small talk and which topics should be never touched. Also looking at how important or less important this is for different cultures and what is sensitive in terms of speed, tone, irony and volume of your voice. And also, as I said, how to deal with introvert people where you have the feeling they don't want to talk, actually.

So these kind of things will be subject of our workshop today, and we will go with the alphabetical order according to our regions. First is AFRALO, and I have two names here, Pastor Peters, he will speak for the English community in Africa, and we have Abdeldjalil Bachar Bong referring to the French speaking community. I ask all presenters to really stick to the time so that we have time for discussion. And after every presentation, I would say we can allow two or three questions for clarification but not for an in-depth discussion on what you have just

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heard. The discussion should come after we have listened to all the presenters.

Without further delay, I would like to hand over to Pastor Peters.

PASTOR PETERS OMORAGBON: First, I'd say thank you to ICANN for putting up this workshop. I'll be very brief and touch on two areas depending on the kind of personality you have. Somebody like me, I'm extroverted in personality, so [I'm a person who's] very free with people. There is a [minus] from where I come from, that is, Nigeria, and that is anybody who has been around Nigeria in any social gathering would observe—and I agree—that we are very loud when we're talking. Most times, the pitch of our voice is high. If you don't understand [inaudible] relate, you would think that we are quarreling. If you see two Nigerians talking and you are a third party with a different background, you would think that we are just having a quarrel.

No. There's passion in the way we express ourselves. So this makes people misunderstand us sometimes, but I know going to a gathering like the ICANN conferences where you have people with different backgrounds, workshop like this, we also have to tailor the way or manner we interact and how we're speaking, gathering in public [inaudible]. That is what I would speak about, that yes, [we do] get to know people, introduce yourselves, but [inaudible] avoid going too personal or too private into people's privacy. [inaudible] respect boundaries and then also, be cautious of the reaction [inaudible] of the person whom you're relating with at any point in time, because we have

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different [inaudible], different background and different [inaudible]. I think that is all I can say for now.

SANDRA HOFERICHTER: Thank you, Pastor Peters. I'm not sure if Abdeldjalil is connected already. Yesim, can you confirm? I see some messages in the chat.

YESIM NAZLAR: Hi Sandra. Unfortunately, not yet. Looks like we're having some network issues. Currently, we're trying his second line, the one he just shared with us.

SANDRA HOFERICHTER: Okay, then let's ask everyone, do you have questions for Pastor Peters for the moment? Please just raise your hand. Okay, I see no hands raised. You can also put some questions in the chat. Abdeldjalil, I see you have your hand up, and I also see you on the screen now. Are you ready to speak?

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Hello everyone. Thank you very much. Thanks for the entire team for this intercultural exchange. My name is Abdeldjalil Bachar Bong, and I'm going to say a few things about the African culture at ICANN, what to do and not to do in a conversation. You have to shake people's hands when you greet someone. So we do shake hands, and we ask how their family is, if the kids are okay. Sometimes, some of us have several wives and

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extended families. So we do ask about the kids, neighbors, family. That's part of greeting someone in our African cultures.

We do listen to one another, we do not interrupt the person. We do not fix the person in the eyes. But that depends on the community. We have several languages being spoken. We use the local Arabic, but in big cities like N'Djamena, it's going to be different and we're going to use another language.

So regarding private life, all the generation of each person, each family. We had some [wars] recently so we do avoid those difficult political subjects not to upset people. We're about 50% Muslims, we have an important Christian community as well, Catholics, Protestants. So we do avoid religious subjects as well.

Is it important, those conversations? Yes, it is. People like to exchange. This is a tradition that we do have. This is polite to do small talk with someone. This is important, this enables you to get to know the person. So we do have strong cultural diversity in our countries. There's also a difference between men and women. Women keep all the secrets of the family, so they're not going to open up about family secrets and issues. So there are things that you can say aloud and things that are never said.

So when you do not greet someone, the person is not to greet you. So you have to send a signal. And that is why it's so important to greet everybody, to have a good relationship with everyone. Thank you very much.

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SANDRA HOFERICHTER: Thank you very much, Abdeldjalil. Are there any questions to our speaker from AFRALO? I see there is some chat going on in this regard on how to continue with saying hello. But is there anything that someone would like to raise or ask? David, please go ahead.

DAVID MACKEY: Hi. The question I have—this whole exercise is great, and the recent speaker was perfect, because it's coming from a very different culture that I exist in. So the question I have is, how does Abdeldjalil's culture deal with people who are outsiders? What kind of expectations would they have when an outsider comes in, and how can we as an outsider make that an easier transition to speak with someone from your background? Thank you.

SANDRA HOFERICHTER: Thank you for the question. Abdeldjalil, I think that goes directly to you.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Thank you for your question. I'm right in the middle of Africa. I have Cameroon by me, Central African Republic is another neighboring country. Libya is north of us. So we are at a crossroads of cultures. And we do respect foreigners. And we do welcome foreigners as well. This is part of our culture.

When you visit N'Djamena and you go to a village, we need to welcome foreigners and give them food, and it would be a shame if we are not welcoming foreigners. In my country, we do respect those foreigners, we do welcome them warmly with food and conversations. So the



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foreigners are accepted, are welcomed, and we do consider them a part of our community. We do organize, in Chad, some meetings with foreigners. We do invite them in our homes. And this is part of our culture. Thank you.

PASTOR PETERS OMORAGBON: Can I add something, please?

SANDRA HOFERICHTER: Pastor Peters, please go ahead.

PASTOR PETERS OMORAGBON: Just to add to what Abdeldjalil just said, and the response to the question by the questioner as to how we receive an outsider, one thing that is very common with African culture is the fact that we are culturally sensitive, and I'll speak from our own background, there are some cultures in Africa, based on their religion, you are not allowed to go too close to their wives.

Now, let me make an example of the Muslim community. The Muslim community, their wives, they use what they call the [inaudible] so you come to their homes, you are entertained. But that social interaction, that freedom of interaction, of engagement, is not there because the women are more or less in the background.

But if you move to the other part, like in my country, we have Muslims and Christians, and depending on your exposure, you could come to

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[this part of] Nigeria, our women are very free to interact with strangers and visitors when they come visiting.

So if you come into a place, two things you ought to try to bear in mind is what is the religious leaning of the people you're going to visit, and what is their cultural value? So what [is that relationship] like? The men will welcome you with warmth, it is natural in every African community to welcome strangers and give food.

One other thing you must also avoid is to refuse any form of entertainment given to you by your host, like [inaudible] drinks, food, and you say, sorry, you don't feel like eating, most cultures see that as disrespectful, that that means you do not value what they're offering. So what you try to do is t registry as much as possible to adapt. Even if you don't want to eat the food, just have a taste of it and say, "I don't want to offend you, let me just have a taste of it," and you accept whatever is offered to you [inaudible].

And then greetings. In Africa, we are very sensitive to seniority. In Africa, you cannot come to an African man who is old and tell him "hi" or "hello." In my culture, we love to be respected, "Good afternoon, sir." That is why, even when we go out, the average African man respects authority, whether the person is older than him or not, as long as you have authority over that person, you see us using the word, "Good afternoon, sir." Which is contrary to what is operational in the western world. You are called by your first name in the western world, but in our place, you are addressed by your surname as Mr. or Mrs. Not just Peter or Paul.

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So those are things that we are sensitive to when it comes to cultural values. So those are some of the things I'd like to add to what Abdeldjalil just said. Thank you.

SANDRA HOFERICHTER:

I see Hadia has her hand raised, but since we're running out of time and I was told the interpreters cannot extend, Hadia, can we take your question to the general discussion later on? Okay, thank you for understanding. And without further delay, let's then go to the next region, which is the Asia Pacific region. Amrita is available to share with us about the art of small talk in your region. I know it's very large, but let's go ahead, Amrita.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Thank you, Sandra. Before I share some of the points or I try to share some perspective from Asia Pacific which is huge and diverse, I wanted to make a few points. And the first is, as humans, we all love to communicate. Many of us can interact spontaneously whilst some take time. We need to keep in mind that we all as humans want to communicate to each other. So that's the first point, and we need to keep that in mind and also understand that just because a person is not conversing does not mean that the person does not want to communicate or is not interested in the communication. It may be that the person does not know how to open up or get into a conversation.

And that is why small talk is necessary. Small talk helps to create a communication channel. You're in an ICANN meeting. First, you'll feel like a lost puppy out there. If there is someone who comes and warmly

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talks to you, you open up to the person. And if someone senior comes and speaks to you, you get open to that person, you get close to that person. You feel belonged. And it also helps to make bonds between people and understand different perspectives, which in a meeting, you may not understand, but in the back doors, if you are conversing with someone, you understand perspectives and that actually helps not only to network but also to mitigate potential impasses.

For example, if during the fellowship, I met a few fellows and I spoke to them between sessions or when we went out for lunch or even to visit a place, that forms a bond. So whenever I need, say for example, a particular information of, say, Nigeria, I can reach out to that person and they provide me that information. So that makes me more resourceful.

So small talk is not just small talk. In my view, it actually makes you more resourceful. So this is something which builds trust. So I know for example if I had been speaking to some person, I know what more or less their frame of thoughts are, and if there is a conversation which comes up, so and so said this, I will either rely on it or have some doubt on it, or I will go and ask that person whether this is what they had said. So you get into a level of understanding and maturity.

Now, coming back to our region, it is very diverse, as in if I try to say something, it would be bad. But I will try to say it from my perspective. We hold 60% of the world's population, 4.6 billion people stay in our region. And it is diverse in terms of geographical features, in terms of culture, languages, income distribution, population size, societal

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development, literacy rates and economies. So it's very difficult to speak about my region in that way.

We have some cultures which are very warm. For example, a very informal example, the Pacific Islands for that matter. And we also have some countries who are moderate and countries who are quite formal—Japan, China. You have to follow some amount of formality. So, what is right for someone may be right or wrong, but we have to accept it as it is. So it's not as if we have to comment upon it, but if we just keep those in mind, it helps. Similarly, in certain cultures, it is not appropriate to speak before someone asks you to speak or they are very hierarchical in the conversation.

So if someone is not speaking or reacting, perhaps these may be the things which happen. So we need to actually have some amount of sensitivity of these things. Second, in certain cultures, it is inappropriate for men to shake hands with women. And this has happened before me with a lady and a person who didn't know about it, so I just said, no, they don't shake hands, they just say hello to you. So I was there, I could mitigate it. But many times, people don't understand it.

Similarly, there are certain places where there is a group of men, a woman going and speaking, and it's a bit difficult for them to understand. So those are certain things which obviously, people, many women break it up, but there are people who are hesitant about it and the men may not open up instantaneously. But that's how it is, they have to live with it.

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Similarly, eye contact. In many places, eye contact is essential, but in some countries, if you have too much eye contact, especially from men to a woman, it is inappropriate. So there are various dichotomies which happen.

Also, as one of my earlier panelists said, many places, you speak on first name basis. Many places, you need to address people formally. So those also kind of bring hesitation many times to people when they're first time trying to break the ice and speak to each other. But sharing all this with all of you is not to overwhelm anyone, as in you know these things much more than me, but just to point it out so that when we want an effective communication with someone, we must consider that what we feel appropriate may not be appropriate for others. So actually, we need to keep an open mind.

Now, in terms of—there is a difference also in the way a man and a woman interact. I'm sure we all know about it, but we need to be sensitive about those things.

In terms of dos and don'ts, I don't want to be specific, but we all know we need to be sensitive of people, their cultures, you need to be polite with people and be genuine. Just don't fake it at times. Fakeness can be understood. Try to show interest when someone is speaking in the conversation. It's not just you who has to speak in the conversation. And initiate the conversation at times. If you think there's someone and you want to speak, you speak.

Similarly, speak a bit slowly and in an audible voice, because not everyone is native English speaking. Even if they can speak English,

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accents differ. So it takes time for people to understand things. So that's, I think, very important.

In terms of don'ts, I would say certain things that come to mind is don't get into controversial topics initially, unless and until you're very familiar with the person, especially politics, religion or bias about a place or culture. Those are my big don'ts, and also gender-based bias. Women do this, women do that, women keep this. Don't get into it. Those are absolutely conversation breakers, I would say.

In a nutshell, I would say don't assume you know everything. Even if we say that, okay, people coming from this race may be this way, but don't box them. Not everyone falls into boxes. So see the thing, observe, and then react to it. Do not assume you know everything, because I think that's something which is important.

And lastly, if we feel that someone is an introvert, give introverts time to respond. They take some time to come out. Use a warmer tone with them, be subtler. If they think that you are not a threat vector or whatever you're saying is not going to be judged, people will open up.

So I think these are certain things which I would say it's not only for Asia Pacific but my interactions with people from across the globe actually place certain things into the same brackets. You may be wherever you are, but there are certain things which are similar for people, it's just that certain things may be different. But we need to be culturally sensitive and understand that what is agreeable, for example, shaking hands or kissing, which is agreeable in certain parts of the world, may not be in some parts. That doesn't make anything less. You can use a

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namaste, you can use [inaudible] or bow your hand. It's absolutely okay. So we should be open. That's it from me, Sandra. I know there would be more people who have more to say, but this is all I could think of and I'm happy to take questions or anything. Thank you.

SANDRA HOFERICHTER:

Thank you very much, Amrita. That was very interesting. Any questions to Amrita? Okay, I see no hands raised and nothing in the chat apart from a lot of agreement with what you said, Amrita. So let's immediately go to another region of the world, which is my region, Europe, but I can tell you my next speaker and his culture is quite different from the southern part of Europe, so I'm glad that we have a representative of a region where small talk is—I wouldn't say not so common, but where people are hesitant to be open and easygoing. So Yrjö, you have the floor for EURALO.

YRJÖ LANSIPURO:

Thank you, Sandra. As you said, there are well known stereotypes about how Europeans differ as to their ability in engaging in small talk and social skills in general. And like all stereotypes, there is some truth in them. There is a south-north dimension. People in northern Europe are less inclined to manage small talk, and perhaps they also are not so afraid of silence. No need to fill every second with talk.

Anyway, the question is, how much actually are we talking about intercultural stereotypes or individual differences? Because there are extroverts in the north and there are introverts in the south. Next slide, please.



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Just to show that these things are not simple and actually quite complicated, there is a phenomenon that the Chinese call jingfen, spiritual Finnish. A Finnish cartoon called Finnish Nightmares is pretty popular in China, it seems, and actually, it seems that millions of Chinese people want to be what is called spiritually Finnish. That is to say, be a little bit alone and so on. So this is an example that things are not that simple. Next slide, please.

But of course, this is a picture from Brussels. This is where our ministers and other leaders gather almost on a weekly basis. So in actual practice, what you see on television most every night or week is people gathering in the halls of European Union, and it always takes a lot of time to sit down because there is ample time reserved for small talk, and that is by purpose. Small talk is necessary because small talk is short talk, it's not occasion for explaining something in detail. It's also smart talk in the sense that when you gather before the actual meeting, there is a possibility of dropping a line, a hint of something that you're going to say and that helps in this [business part of the encounter.]

And I would say that European Union and all that integration we have in so many areas has also lead to the integration of social codes, to a degree. Not entirely, but at least these cultural differences tend to be subdued on our continent more and more. Next slide, please.

So be conservative in what you send, be liberal in what you accept. I think that many of you know this maxim, it's called Postel's law and it's also called robustness principle. But actually, it comes from the telegraph days and it meant, really, transmission speed, not to transmit too fast so that people understand what you are transmitting. And I

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think this sums up a lot of things that have been said so far. That is to say, you have to be cautious, a little bit conservative in what you say in small talk not to touch things that people don't want to be touched. There are also of course other rules, but there's also lots of books where you can learn about small talk.

One of the things is that small talk is not me talk. That is to say, it's not good to talk about yourself, it's better to talk about your partner and show interest and empathy. Next slide, please.

Some of you might remember a band called GEMS. We used to play at ICANN meetings when there were still ICANN meetings. So I like this musical analogy. That is to say, in order to be successful in international settings and for instance ICANN meetings, it's useful to try to transpose yourself into another key. That is to say, you have your national, your own original key where you can play all the melodies you want, but the thing is that you also should be able to play them in an international setting, intercultural setting and still be yourself. The same melody but just a different key. Thank you.

SANDRA HOFERICHTER:

Thank you very much, Yrjö. Also to everyone, questions to Yrjö. I realized I overlooked questions in the chat that were posted while Amrita was speaking, but I have taken note of it and we will put that in the general discussion. Please raise your hand if you would like to pose a question to Yrjö.

Okay, seeing no hands up, let's continue with LACRALO. There we have also two speakers, Claire Craig and Lilian Ivette de Luque Bruges. Please

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also be mindful of the time. Both of you together should not exceed 15 minutes.

CLAIRE CRAIG:

Thank you very much. I am going to be talking today about the English speaking Caribbean within the LACRALO. I'm sure most of you know where the Caribbean is located. Next slide, please. We are thousands of islands and territories around the Caribbean Sea, but it is important to know that some of the islands—some countries and territories not included—are Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela. Belize is included, and Guyana and Suriname. Next slide, please.

I would like to show you a short video on Caribbean complexity. Please play the video.

VIDEO:

I'm not a European, I'm not an African, I'm not an Indian, I'm not Chinese or Syrian. I'm not [inaudible]. None of these. I am all of these. I am a rare hybrid. I'm a [inaudible] multilayered creature. Precious [inaudible] the world is my oyster. I see the world clearly from my island [fountain.] I do not harbor the vanities of some big city dweller or somebody from a large, vast continent. I'm the tip of the spear that leads into the future. I am a Caribbean.

CLAIRE CRAIG:

Next slide, please. The person who just spoke is one of our carnival mask designers by the name of Peter Minshall, and he was one of the

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main designers at one of the Olympics opening ceremonies in Georgia in the USA.

I share that so that you can understand how diverse our culture is in the Caribbean. Even though we are small, we are very different. So here are some dos and don'ts. And it's important to understand that it's very different in an informal setting to a formal setting. We are warm, friendly people who really like to talk. We can be very personal very quickly, which means that we can start talking about topics that other cultures may think are sensitive. And I heard someone from Africa saying it. Well, actually, the person from Nigeria, in that we may ask you about your family, your wife, your children, your education, which to other persons may be a little bit personal.

When we are together, we have our own languages that we speak. Some of us speak creole, some speak Patwa, and so it can be a little intimidating. But we do like to all talk, and that's what we call small talk, with food and drink.

When we talk as well, there are innuendos, which means that there are double meanings to some of what we say, and sometimes foreigners may misinterpret it. And there is a lot of what we call picong, which is teasing, heckling, and you see samples of that in our music. Next slide, please.

So these are the formal setting, and in the formal setting, there is no small talk. We want to get straight to the point, our language is very proper, we speak the queen's English. At meetings, we are driven by an agenda.

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What I would suggest is that we avoid stereotyping. So don't think about the Caribbean as just sun, sea, sand and for others, rum. Religion is very important to us. And when I say that, we in the Caribbean, it is not uncommon to see someone who identifies as Christian or Muslim being married to someone who identifies as Hindu, and we all live very well together and we enjoy each other's festivals. We are naturally collaborative. So even in doing this presentation, a few of us from different islands came together to make this happen. Next slide, please.

So if you want to get to know us, here are some dos and don'ts. And I think Amrita spoke to some of them. Be genuine. You can tell a fake very easily, so be genuine, authentic. Don't make assumptions. So Caribbean, the Caribbean people are very different, so don't try to guess. Don't ask if everyone's a Jamaican, because we feel very passionate about our uniqueness.

We are well traveled but not necessarily for vacation. Our traveling is usually for work and education. We have vast cultures, and some of you may be aware of our carnivals all over the world. We are well educated, both formally and informally. So there are the traditional oral traditions that [have educated our people.]

So getting to know us, some of the things that we like to talk about are the diversity of our food. We love to eat, to cook, so talk to us about those things. Talk to us about sports. We're very much into cricket, football—as some people would call soccer—track and field, netball, cycling. But we're also passionate about tennis and American football. And of course, we like to talk about our music, reggae, steel pan, calypso and carnival. Next slide, please.

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So these are just some pictures that show some of the diversity of our culture, who we are. Thank you very much.

SANDRA HOFERICHTER: Thank you very much, Claire. Without further delay, let's just go to your colleague, Lilian Ivette.

LILIAN IVETTE DE LUQUE BRUGES: Thank you very much. Good morning, good afternoon, good evening, everyone. I will focus my presentation on the art of small talk in Latin America. Three languages but lots of styles, and this is how we communicate among each other informally.

Latin America is culture, music, joy, tradition, beautiful places, diversity of languages. But I would like to show an example from only one country so as to see how many of our countries maybe identify with that. We have a common thread about music, tradition, culture. This is a short video, one minute.

VIDEO: [inaudible]

LILIAN IVETTE DE LUQUE BRUGES: That's it. Thank you. This is just to show who we are. As I was saying, Latin America is very diverse, very large with different cultures, different people. We communicate in the same language but we don't speak the

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same way. And this comes from our context, where each of us comes from.

Brazilians are a special case. They speak Portuguese and Portuguese is a Latin language as Spanish is. These are both Roman languages. These are languages with similar roots, but it is very easy for them to understand us—easier for them to understand us than us to understand them. But we also use body language, gestures to make an emphasis when we speak, when we want to be understood.

So when we meet informally, we shake hands for the first time, but when there is a friendship, when there is some kind of bond, we tend to be very warm, we tend to kiss on the cheek, to hug each other when we go out, we say hello to everybody, we say hello to people in meetings. We like to say hello. We say hello to everybody.

Spanish, or the languages that we have here in Latin America, are so broad, so diverse that they enrich our vocabulary when we interact with other people in our region. And we learn new words, curious words. We always ask, how do you say a certain word in Portuguese, or you ask for a certain word for an Argentinian or a Mexican, because maybe it's the same word but it is used differently in different countries and it has different meanings maybe.

And there are even some words that are not understood, and we need to explain them, we need to say what they will mean in other places, what is the equivalent for that word in another place.

As I said, we speak the same language and we can understand each other, we can even understand the Brazilians or English or French

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speakers in our region, and we look for an equivalent. We just ask, how do you say this in your language? And this is what we are like. We are more spontaneous. Next slide, please.

All right, so the informal part, informal chat between Latin Americans, as I said, is filled with specific words, with idioms. It would be very enriching, and at the same time, it could be real fun. We can be a bit noisy, we may be speaking at a high volume, especially those who live in high region, they tend to have a more moderate tone of voice. We make a lot of gestures with our hands, and this is what makes us be more empathic in what we say.

We laugh a lot, and we can even laugh very strongly when we are speaking in groups, but formal communications between Latin Americas from different countries can be done by trying to be as neutral as possible, avoiding idioms so it is more understandable. Next slide, please.

So, what do we cherish? We cherish happiness and friendship, we have strong social ties, and this is translated in both formal and informal conversations. We provide each other with strong emotional support, we always ask for our families, our jobs, our friends, etc.

And we can make a very intense bond very quickly. As I was saying, we shake hands. If you know more the person, you maybe kiss or you hug, but this probably happens when there's a higher level of trust.

And then another controversial issue that is very passionate is, of course, politics and soccer. These are difficult issues. You can create healthy conversations around those issues and at the same time, you



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can see strong divisions between friends and colleagues. So this always has to be informal and this kind of talk should not really be very intense.

So this is my presentation. As I was saying, it's something very short. This is a rather expansive issue. But I tried to summarize it as much as possible to use it with the time we have. So, thank you very much, and I am now open for questions if you have any. Thank you.

SANDRA HOFERICHTER:

Thank you very much, Lilian Ivette. Are there any urgent questions? Because otherwise, in the interest of time, I would like to go ahead with my last presenter, which comes from NARALO. Then we have to see how much time we still have. I see there are no hands raised. Marita, over to you, and we'll try to sum up in an efficient way.

MARITA MOLL:

Okay. Thank you, Sandra. I have heard so many amazing things here. It's a real education, even though you think you know something about it. I've called this no talk too small in that small talk is not unimportant talk. It's actually really important. It's a way of breaking the ice between two people who absolutely do not know each other. That's how I'm looking at this topic, and I'm also looking at it within the ICANN context, because there's a much wider context, of course, of getting to know people in their home and family environments. Next slide, please.

Yes, of course, I'm speaking for the NARALO region, which is Canada and the USA and Puerto Rico and it's going to be a huge generalization. I'm going to try to keep myself out of trouble here. And always, people who

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hear this have to realize that everything I say is coming from my own context, and I'm trying very hard to be as general as I can. But I am Canadian and I think that I can fairly say that Canadians tend to be pretty cautious, hesitant, don't like to stand out in a crowd.

This slide particularly is trying to show that I'm just trying to say that I don't know a great deal about how Puerto Ricans are addressing, treating small talk, because I don't know that many people from Puerto Rico, but the ones I have met, friendly, welcoming, and I think probably more outgoing.

Our southern neighbors in the US, I hope that they would agree with me in saying that Americans, US, are outgoing and talkative and probably more approachable sometimes than Canadians. I really related to what Yrjö said. I think Canadians have a lot in common with our northern neighbors in Sweden, Norway and Denmark and Finland in that we can see the silent spaces, and that small talk generally, we try to make it short. We're not always that comfortable with it.

It is sometimes a difficulty for us and something that we have to learn to deal with. I will say here also that there are extroverts and introverts at every culture. We've already heard that. And sometimes it's a bigger difference than cultures. I will also say that we have indigenous cultures in our lands who will be communicating in completely different ways, and this is not something that I'm able to speak about. It's too bad that there isn't anyone who can speak about that, because I think I could learn a lot from that as well.

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I will say that I'm personally an introvert. So getting into the small talk is something that I actually had to learn how to do. I certainly know that sometimes there's still panic attacks when I look at a big room full of people that I don't know and try to figure out how to move into that room and speak to someone.

I learned that if you need to do that, you'll have to walk into the room, choose a group of people or a person, introduce yourself, give one sentence why you're in that room, explain your presence in that room, and then I found the best thing to do is just ask a question that would provoke some kind of response that you can hook on to and move into some kind of conversation. I am still occasionally struck by that panic, but not nearly as often. Next slide, please.

Opening lines. Most people find this very funny, but favorite Canadian lines is about weather. We can easily walk up to someone and say, "Oh my goodness, it's snowing again. We wish it would be a little warmer." That is not that common in other cultures. I don't know about northern cultures, Finland or Sweden, but I know that people who have come to visit me in Canada have found that highly amusing, that we're often talking about weather. And it's just a thing. So if you want to talk to a Canadian, a good place to start is make a remark about the weather. I'm sorry to say that.

But sports, hockey also works really well. Sports in US, football, basketball, soccer in some groups, Puerto Rico, soccer. That works pretty well too. You'll have to find a hook line when you walk into a group of people and try to talk to them. There are of course gender differences which exist everywhere, and we've heard a little bit about

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that. I'm just going to say that I would feel comfortable mostly walking up to women if I admired some piece of clothing, jewelry, and start a conversation by saying, "That's a beautiful necklace you have on."

That would be a bit of a more risky move for men to do. So these kind of gender differences of course will exist everywhere. There's the context you can hook onto if you want to start a conversation with someone, but you would want to always use a positive context. You would not or should not make a judgmental comment about, oh, that speaker wasn't—I didn't find it very interesting. I would simply say that was an interesting speaker, and see what kind of a response you would get from that, whether you liked it or not. Let's go to the next slide, please.

Politics and religion, probably not a good place to start a conversation. You might be able to move into that in a careful way after you've started some kind of a conversation, but certainly not as a beginning. Noncommittal questions, subjects, language—such as interesting rather than terrible—to comment on something. So you should always remain somewhat nonjudgmental, stay positive.

Also, be careful with the language that you choose. There are lots of words in all cultures that can be problematic. As Yrjö said, be conservative in what you send out and be liberal in what you accept. There's an ocean of forgiveness for people who might use a wrong term if it's a second language for them, but if you're corrected, I would just say don't take it personally. In Canada for one thing, we refer to our indigenous peoples as first nations and Inuit. We don't use terms that were used 20 years ago. But this is not something other people would

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know. So if you do happen to use a wrong word for that and someone corrects you, as I say, just take it as a learning experience.

And I like what Yrjö said. Small talk is short talk and small talk is not me talk. I think that's certainly something that everyone needs to take on Board. We're running out of time, so I'm going to leave it there. Thank you.

SANDRA HOFERICHTER:

Thank you very much, Marita. And indeed, we are running out of time and I know that the interpreters cannot extend our session. That's a learning for me too. I put the timeline a little bit too tight. There's unfortunately no time for a general discussion about what we've just heard. But I think that gives us a really good reason to have a second session on that issue and to come up—to have that general discussion about what we just heard, to sink it a little bit, and then maybe to come up with some easy recommendations.

I think we learned we cannot stereotype here, and we also know that we are in an international environment. And one question in this regard that was posted in the chat earlier on was, are there sets of norms for multicultural events that differ from the siloed local cultural norms? That was a question that Avri put in.

And I think that is a very good question, and that could help us in a follow-up session to come up with some—I think three or four bullet points, what to do or not to do, and that could help also new people at ICANN to familiarize a bit easier.

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And as Marita said, she also had to learn how to do this small talk. And I think if you do something like this, this would really help us in the future.

So in the interest of time, I would say no questions and no discussion today, but I would like to ask Hadia who is the chair of this working group who put all this together to put on the agenda when we should meet again, possibly in the new year, and how we conduct such a follow-up session.

And I would love if those who presented today and contributed to that session would also continue contributing to that session and I also hope that the numerous participants—I think 50 participants is quite a good number and shows great interest—I would also hope that you might continue with us and that we all together work on some easy recommendations for ourselves and for new ICANNers.

With this, I hand over back to our staff to close the session. I think Yesim, that is you, right?

YESIM SAGLAM:

Yes, Sandra. Thanks so much. Thank you all for joining today's webinar. This webinar is now adjourned. Have a great rest of the day. Bye.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]**