

YEŞİM SAĞLAM:

Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening to everyone. Welcome to the APRALO monthly teleconference, taking place on Thursday, 21st of December, 2023 at 6:00 UTC.

On our call today, we have Amrita Choudhury, Ali AlMeshal, Amin Hacha, Aris Ignacio, Ashirwad Tripathy, Babu Ram Aryal, Barkha Manral, Bikram Shrestha, Cheryl Langdon-Orr, Dr. Vladimer Svanadze, Eranga Samarathna, Faheem Soomro, Fidya Shabrina, Ghayoor Bawary, Gopal Tadepalli, Harish Chowdhary, Hong Xue, Justine Chew, K Mohan Raidu, Laxmi Prasad Yadav, Maureen Hilyard, Mohammad Kawsar Uddin, Nazmul Hasan Majumder, Prateek Pathak, Priyatosh Jana, Sarai Tevita, Satish Babu, Shah Rahman, Shreedeeep Rayamajhi, Udeep Baral, and Vesmira Harutyunyan.

And just to cover our apologies, we have received apologies from Suhaidi Hassan and from Gisella Gruber from staff. And from staff side, we have Athena Foo and myself, Yeşim Sağlam, present on today's call. And I will also be doing call management. Before we get started, just a kind reminder to please state your name before speaking for the transcription purposes, please. With this, I would like to leave the floor back over to you, Amrita. Thank you very much.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Thank you so much, Yeşim and hello, everyone. Welcome to the last monthly call of this year, 2023. What we will be doing today is get an update from the different working groups at ICANN where our leaders or members have been following what's currently going on so that we

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are abreast with what's happening. And based upon your interests, you could join those working groups or conversations.

So we will be having Shah presenting on the Operations, Finance, and Budget Working Group. I don't know whether Adarsh is there in the call. If he's there, in case there is any updates from the Social Media Working Group, he would be placing it. But I don't think there's much happening there. Satish would be presenting on the CPWG, which is the place where most of the policy discussions happen every week. Cheryl will be giving an update on the Rules of Procedure working group, where our APRALO members, whoever has volunteered, have been working. Justine and Shah will be presenting on the APRALO Policy Forum and what it has been doing this year. Maureen will be giving a bit of an overview of what NomCom is looking at this year.

And then, the final part is where we have our ALS members or individual members who will be sharing a bit about what they have been involved in and what they are doing in terms of ICANN's remit or planning to do in the next couple of months. And they will briefly be sharing. So we have Ashirwad Tripathy from Nepal. We have Amin, who is from Lebanon. We have Ghayoor from Afghanistan and Faheem, who is an individual member from Pakistan. So we have a variety and range of members who will be sharing their views.

And of course, each one of you who are there on the call can ask questions, comments, etc. during the Q&A on the working group or towards the end at the AOB. And if you have anything else to share, you could do so in the AOB. And if you want to raise something, you could always put it into the chat. So without much ado, I would then ask Shah

to present what the Operating, Finance, and Budget Group is doing. So Shah, over to you and it has to be brief. Thank you.

SHAH RAHMAN:

Thank you, Amrita. Good morning, good afternoon, everyone. Actually, lots of things is happening in that working group. Within a short time, I have to cover many topics. But we'll focus on point two because it's the public consultation process that is still ongoing.

So I want to restart from that first, basic updates. Last two weeks ago, there was a new membership call for the OFB Working Group. It was dated in December. I've seen some of the members join from the APRALO [Youth]. I welcome everyone. This is for the ALAC members. To participate in the OFB Working Group is mandatory for us.

There have been every Wednesday, one meeting. Until now, it was on 18:00 UTC. But hopefully, from next time, it will be offered in two timeslots so that different regions can flexibly join in this call. I welcome everyone. You can also join if you are interested to that working group mail. Then maybe you will be able to know the details about it.

So I'm going to the next point, which is now open, the public consultations for the OFB Working Group. We are now discussing the [inaudible] in the OFB calls. [Inaudible] the calls for the public comment is open from December 12th. It is ongoing and the call for [inaudible] will be closed on February. So this is happening. [Inaudible] [seeking input] [inaudible] 25 to 29 [inaudible] Plan, the Draft of ICANN [inaudible] shared that link to know how to make the public comments to that page. So do have, Yeşim, that link? Can you share in chat? Yeah.

YEŞİM SAĞLAM: Sorry, Shah. Yes. Sorry. I was trying to unmute. Amrita shared the link.

SHAH RAHMAN: Yes. For the new or those already in the working group, we know that we have ... I think this is open, that link. Yeah. So the public comment is taking ... Actually, I can do that three in points, Five-Year Strategic Plan, then that Operating Plan and Financial for the Budget in [inaudible], and the IANA 25 Operating Plan and budget. Every five years, ICANN do the strategic plans. And every year, it's anticipated to continue the working update and the community input into that process.

I believe, if I'm not mistaken, that FY25 work will start from July of 24 and end in 25 in June. So that's why we are, [on that committee], expecting that input so that it can align with the ICANN missions.

YEŞİM SAĞLAM: You have five minutes. You will have to be really fast.

SHAH RAHMAN: [Inaudible] Okay. So the next item—this is one [inaudible] important is that last [inaudible] in December, there was two webinars. ICANN also shared the links of these two webinars. Those who want to go through this recording will help them to make comments what is going on, on the Operations and Finance Working Group or how the organization is planning in every aspect. So this webinar was really helpful, if you can go through it. I hope this can you see.

And that next one is about—this is going—ATLAS Funding request, which is ongoing process. It is also discussing, ongoing. Today, we have a meeting at 18:00 UTC, how that funding process works, what is the timing window, and also what priorities of that Operating and Financial Plan. [When it is over], discussions will be give then.

Other than that, we have also presentations on the ICANN Grant Program. That will be open, that grant, from the first quarter of 24, into year 24, probably March. Thank you Yeşim. This is the background of the Grant Program details and that is going to be implemented from the first quarter of 2024. So now, from the Org side, by January, there will be a document. Will be very soon, like January, will become the guidelines that will be published. So it will be helpful the community to see that process, how can participate that grant.

This grant is also affiliated with the ICANN missions. And those who thinks, from the community, can contribute to the ICANN programs in the different work, like the DNS or in the [domain] top-level, all these things that need to be shared by the applicants through the application process. That is the details of this program.

Also, in our working group, all the discussion is going on. So I would like to request, if you can have time, to join in our working group call so you can get more information from there. Thank you. If you have any questions and queries, I'll be happy to take it.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Thank you, Shah. Thank you for sharing it. Just so anyone knows, and Justine has put it into the chat, if you want to join, you can send your

request to staff to be included in the mailing list. On the public consultation, we will have a separate call sometime early next month, wherein more overview will be given. But before that, we will be giving you the document so that you can go through it. We will try to get all the information from APRALO and perhaps share it with the larger At-Large community that these are the comments from our region.

On the other part, where the process of budget is being formulated, earlier there was something called an ABR through which funding was requested. But that process has changed. At the Operations, Finance, and Budget Working Group, the process is being streamlined as to how applications can be submitted, what are the criteria, etc. So I think the deliberations are happening on that. In case you're interested contribute, please do join. And if you have any questions for Shah or Ali, because he's also there, you can put it into the chat.

And with that, I would also Adarsh. Adarsh, is there anything happening in the Social Media Working Group? If not, then perhaps we will go to CPWG. But if you could confirm, Adarsh.

ADARSH BU:

For now, as of now, there's no special update there from the Social Working Group, Amrita. Yeah.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Thank you, Adarsh. Perhaps for next month, it will start when things get a bit started on the next ICANN meeting. So Satish, over to you.

SATISH BABU:

Thanks, Amrita. Since time is short, I'll just mention two major items discussed yesterday in the CPWG. It was a very lightweight CPWG meeting yesterday because probably it's the end of the year and the next meeting is only going to be on 10th.

The two major points discussed, one was the Transfer Policy. The Transfer Policy was given a lightweight update because there was no major progress. It was just one of the steps. When you have a transfer of registrant followed by a registry transfer, then there is a chance for hijacking domain or stealing domain. So how to prevent that, that was the discussion but there's nothing conclusive on that.

The second presentation was on the EPDP on IDNs, where we just had a meeting in Kuala Lumpur. I will just mention the phase one and phase two parts of the EPDP. The phase one is now complete. But the difference, basically, is that the focus of phase one was the top-level—IDN variants at the top level. Phase two was the IDN variants at the second level. So this is one major difference. Because of this, there is a bunch of other differences that follow. Current situation is that there is no policy for IDN variants at the top level, as of now. So what we are doing phase one? What we did in phase one was actually somewhat of pioneering kind of work because we didn't have anything to go by.

The second phase actually deals with second-level variants. Currently, it is basically determined by the registry's policies. So there are registries which can provide variants as of now without any other new policy being needed.

Who is it meant for? The first one is largely meant for the next round of new gTLDs. And phase two, because it is to do with the registry policy, it is mostly to do with registries. And who are the main stakeholders? For phase one, it is ICANN, applicants, registries. Phase two, registries, registrars, resellers, registrants, and end users.

Now, you can see that there is an end user impact also, as far as phase two is concerned, a bit more than phase one. Phase one also has end user impact because it is the first time we are having variants at the top level. But the second level, there is more focus because the registrant ... If you consider the registrant to be also end user, then the whole process of registration of a domain is going to change for those scripts which have variants. So there is going to be a couple of extra steps.

Then how are variants identified? In phase one, at the top level, it is the centralized tool called the Root Zone LGR. The Root Zone LGR is a very interesting concept because it combines the work of many language communities called generation panels who create rules for their languages. And that is integrated by the integration panel and converted into the Root Zone LGR. It's a single centralized database so that there is no inconsistency possibly because every variant is identified through this.

But when you come to the second level, because it is registry-level policy and many registries have multiple IDN tables ... This is not [inaudible] yet. It's something called IDN tables. These IDN tables are currently in an inconsistent phase right now. This calls for a process called harmonization, which is new. In the [collaborative] meeting, all the charter questions have been covered but one charter question

relating to the IDN table harmonization. That could not be closed. So for that, a small group has been set up with the registries and ICANN technical staff. They are actually going to resolve it before the end of the year so maybe another week or so. And with that, we will be covering the entire ... So we have consensus at the [plenary] level for the initial report to come out.

Finally, end-user importance. Phase two perhaps has a little higher end user impact or importance. Phase one is largely to do with people who apply for these variants, which is not the typical end user. So this is the basic difference between the phases, phase one and phase two, and the next steps in phase two. The phase one report, I don't know if maybe Justine can tell us later whether the two reports that were to be voted by the Council on the meeting on 19th, whether they were indeed voted through. So the phase one report was placed. [Inaudible] the EPDP, which Maureen and I were working on. So we will hear from Justine on whether these two reports are through.

But otherwise, for the phase two, the next step is to publish the initial report, which will happen quite shortly in January or February. Then the public comment, [inaudible] of public comment through the ICANN meeting at Puerto Rico. After that, we'll give the final report. It will be earlier than the original timeline predicted. So we have actually completed the word. So thanks. I'll stop here. I see a couple of questions.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

There is a question, Satish, from Gopal in case you want to respond.

SATISH BABU: Okay. To save time, I will respond in chat. Back to you, Amrita.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Thank you. Justine, do you want to share anything? Justine mentioned that the GNSO call is tonight, as in today, later. So if you have any questions for Satish, you can put it in the chat or we will take it later. Next, I think we have ... Whom do we have, Yeşim, in our list?

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: It's me.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Cheryl's got it covered. Yes. The ROP. What's happening?

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: I tell you what. I get unwell and you forget about me and Marita. I'm devastated that you could forget about me so easily. Sorry, people.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: We will not forget about Cheryl.

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: I'm coming out of COVID so forgive my peculiar sense of humor. Blame COVID. Okay. I'm going to give you a very brief update on the fantastic work and progress that's being done by our APRALO community

members, and of course Justine in particular, with a little help from myself from time to time, with regards to our review and update of the Rules of Procedure.

As those of you who were involved in our meeting in Turkiye, when we had our general assembly, we discussed at significant length why we needed to do it and what we were doing. The work has continued, literally week in and week out. The group has been meeting weekly and we are progressing very well. So at this end-of-year meeting, I was to recognize and hope that you will all give a virtual, if not actual, vote of thanks to the small team, which is continuing on in this review work on your behalf.

We are having our next meeting on January the 4th. And at that point, we believe we will be perilously close to just doing final toilette and tidying up on the document that will be available for all of us to do a final review, sanity check, and then have ICANN Legal look at as well. Then of course, we will have some online voting system and then make the magic happen. And it will come into pass as a 2024 version.

What I wanted to do, though, I put in the chat that the link you've got there is to the landing page for the Rules of Procedure review working group. On that page, you will find links to all of our meetings. So if any of you are particularly interested, everything's recorded. Everything is there.

We are making one substantive change that I wanted to update you all on. That is compared to what you were shown at the general assembly. The section on individual members, which we went over, there's quite a

great deal of information there which brought things in line with the review work that was done out of the Unaffiliated Individual Member Mobilization Working Party. We've decided to move the majority or significant amounts of that detailed criteria information into an adjunct section of Rules of Procedure and have a similar, or very close to on par, section on At-Large Structure criteria and individual member criteria so that both meet and complement the outcomes of the various mobilization working party activities. And both have adjunct documents with all the gory details.

I think with that, I'm running out of puff and perfectly happy for Justine and I to take any questions. But time is not our friend today. So please, post them to the list—I just mean the APRALO discuss list—as we are certainly doing work over what many of you will be having as a small break. We will be able to respond to you there. Back to you, Amrita.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Thank you, Cheryl. And yes, the members of the working group do have homework. There are lists of members but many of them are not attending the calls. So please do your homework in case you want your names there because we want to be a bit ruthless from now on, that we either work completely or we don't. So we have a homework in the group. So please do your homework. And with that, we move on to the APRALO Policy Forum updates. Justine, over to you and Shah, whoever is speaking.

JUSTINE CHEW:

Thanks, Amrita. I think I will take the first hit. Very briefly, in the interest of time, I'm just going to highlight a couple things, most importantly, the achievements and the recommendations for the next year, insofar as the APRALO Policy Forum is concerned.

In terms of this year, we have achieved quite a few things. I stress again, the way we plan our activities is always with reference to the regional priorities that have been established for 2023 and 2024. So that is always our guiding document or guiding place where we refer back to things that we're supposed to be doing, things that we need to be doing insofar as policy is concerned or policy discussions is concerned within APRALO.

This list of regional priorities for 2023 and 2024 were produced out of the APRALO hot topics survey that we conducted in 2022. It's been refreshed over time. So in terms of using the regional priorities as a guide, we have been able to establish strong practice with targeted focus and also establish delivery practices. What I mean by that is that if, for example, we do a webinar, then we know what is the general agenda for it, depending on the topic. If we do a fireside chat, then we have a typically format for that. Also, ICANN readouts kind of thing, we have a report of that. So that's the sort of thing I'm referring to.

We have managed to very successfully cover all the priorities except for two. But these two are ongoing, per se. So we haven't been able to schedule a particular or specific event around those yet or activity around those two yet. The first one is to do with the global public interest discussion. And the second one has got to do with DNS abuse mitigation.

Now, I just want to point out that in terms of the global public interest discussion, that's typically tied to something. In the near future, anyway, that's going to be tied to something called the Registry Voluntary Commitments. And that is a discussion that is going to be undertaken through CPWG. So I would encourage you all to follow what's going on in CPWG in the new year. But insofar as we're concerned there, we can also bring that conversation back to APRALO. So we'd be looking to see whether we can have a single-purpose consultation with APRALO on things that are being discussed in CPWG. That's what I mean by remedial action in the works.

We have managed to engage a good number of participants for all our events or all our activities, including non-APRALO people. For the second half of this year, our events average about 39 per event. So that's a pretty high number. Considering that we're attracting people from outside APRALO, I think that's a good indication as well that we are also supporting discussions, not just within our RALO but facilitating people from other RALOs to have a look and see what we're doing.

We instituted the end-user-driven regional cross-community networking. This is introducing the APRALO ICANN readouts. So as I said, we have made it a point to produce reports—what we call takeaway reports—out of those readouts. The idea is that these reports, or their outputs, really, serve as inputs for further planning, regional strategy, or action, depending on what was discussed.

We also introduced the APF Town Hall Meetings. That is more for consultations with the group, with the APRALO folks, as to whether

we're doing all right in terms of the activities that we're running on the APF.

And in terms of recommendations, out of what we've analyzed for all the activities that we've undertaken in 2023, these are the recommendations, which is to review the original priorities and update where necessary, because although it's a guide, it's also meant to be a living document that we need to update from time to time. Otherwise, it becomes obsolete.

The first half of this year, the activities were more focused inwards, I would say. So they were predominately just APRALO monthly calls. So very inward-focused, whereas the second half the year was activities that were more outward-focused, as engaging APRALO members outside of APF—as I said, also members outside of APRALO itself. So moving forward, I think we need to consider having a better balance in terms of inward- and outward-focusing activities to have greater impact [in both]. Included in that also is probably the use of more polls and surveys, single-topic consultations. I've mentioned that already. And we should align those with what's happening in the CPWG.

Institute better participant metrics. So that's something that I think Amrita has mentioned. We really want to see who is coming to our events, who's contributing to our events. It's a form of metric collection to have data points so that we can effectively improve ourselves. And everyone is involved in that. Again, it comes towards having a regard for continuous improvement. So we can do something very well this year but we always want to try to improve on that. So that is the impetus for that.

So moving on, slide number two, please. Next slide, please. This is just a summary of the first half, the breakdown. This is the first half and the second half of 2023. The reason why I broke it down, as I said, because we had an inward focus for the first half and a more outward focus in the second half. So just to distinguish between the two.

As you see, in terms of the first half, the average participants in the monthly calls was 21, whereas in the second half, the average participants for all our activities is 39 participants. So quite a big difference. And in terms of all the other points, I think it's quite self-explanatory and I've covered it in the first slide, anyway. Next slide, please.

This is what I referred to when I said the APRALO Regional Priorities 23-24. I'm not going to go through this. This has been available throughout the year, anyway. So I just wanted to recap it here so that people are aware that this exists and they can study it in their own time.

The next slide will show you we've managed to cobble together some data points regarding things like participant numbers as well as which criteria or which priority each event actually hits on or addresses. I'll stop there and take any questions. Shah, would you like to add anything?

SHAH RAHMAN:

No, Justine. I'm fine. You have given a brief presentation so it covers all the points. Thank you.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Thank you, Justine and Shah for this, as in that excellent datapoints and very strategically done. I think we should amplify it, as I mentioned it in the chat, more, so that the inputs, etc., which come in from our regions, which is very diverse and has different requirements, is captured, as well as we show to the community that, “Look, we are supporting the mission, vision of ICANN, in a very strategic way.” And I see your hand up.

JUSTINE CHEW: Yeah. Thanks, Amrita. I just wanted to make this point that one aspect that Shah reported on in the OFB Working Group is this question about ALAC and At-Large Strategic Priorities. We are going through the exercise now of creating priorities for At-Large at the At-Large level—at the plenary level. So you all should be proud by the fact that APRALO has done this in that last one year. At least you know that we have our regional strategic priorities that we are organizing our activities around. So I think we are ahead of the curve from At-Large. Thanks.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Thanks, Justine. Do you plan to go some kind of survey for the next year or something in terms of what the community thinks are priority? Because At-Large may have a priority. We may be aligned but there may be certain things in our region which we considered prior. So we need to marry both of them. It could be a small, informal thing, not an extensive one like you did in 2022. Just so that we can always be ahead of the curve.

JUSTINE CHEW:

Yeah. Sure. As I said, I believe that in terms of next year, what we have done is going to still be in practice. So we have periodic reviews of our regional strategic priorities. So we will take the opportunity to align them with what is happening at the At-Large plenary level. I don't think it's going to digress a lot, anyway.

And in terms of for 2024-25 or 2025 onwards, we might want to have a totally new strategic priority document. So probably one of the things that we'd be looking to do next year is to have a hot topics survey again because we typically run that every three years or so. So I think it's time for us to do it again next year, maybe. Thanks.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Thanks, Justine. And we move on to Maureen, who will give us a NomCom update. And Satish, after Maureen, I have a question for you. We had come to know that there were two or three submissions from APRALO but do you know of more submissions being made by APRALO for the UAB? I know that [pik-a-sok] made submission or something. But I think it was a bit late because there was something. So perhaps if you have some data, after Maureen, you could share that. Maureen, over to you.

MAUREEN HILYARD:

Thank you, Amrita. Okay. This slide is really just what the ICANN Nominating Committee is all about. And of course, we're looking for leaders. For those of you who don't know, the Nominating Committee does actually look at the responsibilities of filling gaps. Each year, there

is always some gaps in each of the different constituencies. And the Nominating Committee has a responsibility to fill these.

So as in previous years, this year's Nominating Committee, this NomCom, which it's shortened to, is again looking for new leaders. And we're looking for leaders who have these sorts of skills—critical thinking, cultural awareness, knowledge of the Internet ecosystem, some board and executive experience. We're actually looking at the leadership level and relative experience in a range of different fields that may be of value to ICANN.

Also, why you should apply. If you think that you have these skills and you could fill some of the positions that I'm going to raise in a few minutes, you should apply. Or if you know someone that you think would be suitable, who doesn't necessarily have to have anything to do with ICANN at the moment but has some knowledge of the whole Internet ecosystem, tap them on the shoulder and send them to the position descriptions, which I will lead you to in a sec. Can I have the next slide, please?

These are the positions that are vacant for this year. We need three members for the ICANN Board of Directors. Each year, it's around about that number for ICANN. They're always replenishing the ICANN Board with new faces and new experiences, new people bringing their voice to the decision-making level of ICANN Board.

We have two regional reps for the At-Large Advisory Committee, the ALAC. This year, it's for Europe, EURALO, and North America, NARALO. So you will note that we had an APRALO vacancy last year. And of

course, our dear Justine got that role. Nice to see her back. But also, for 2024, we will need one member for the GNSO Council and one member for the ccNSO Council. So there's a range of positions. Next slide please.

And this is why it's really important that I bring it to you today. The applications open on the second of January and closes on the 15th of March. It's not too far away. So just remember that you've only got a little bit of a window for getting into your networks and seeing if there is anyone who might be interested in applying. Next slide, which is the final slide, too.

Okay. Now, it says here, "Learn about positions at this link." Unfortunately, we actually don't have all the position descriptions available as yet from the different communities. So they won't be there as yet. They will be there—assuming that all the communities are going to give their information—will be there before January. What I'm going to put into the chat is the link to the 2023 positions.

Now, those positions, the expectations for those positions won't be too different. So it will give you an idea, if you're looking at the possibility of applying or you know somebody who might be interested in applying, to check out the 2023 until end of December, beginning of January. And they'll be able to get the real ones for 2024. But it's really important that we get as many applications as we can so please put it out to your networks and give us an opportunity to have some good choices to be looking at to fill those positions for 2024. Thank you so much.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Thank you so much, Maureen, for this update. If you have any questions, etc., you could reach out to Maureen separately, asking questions. And if she's in a position to answer about the job description, the profile, etc., in some way she would be able to help you. And if you have some great candidates which you would want to discuss with Maureen, you could do so now. When the application period is open, after that, she would be closed-lipped. So if you have someone, do speak to her right now.

And on the question which I have, I see Shah has pasted the details out there. But Satish, I had a question because Sarai had reached out to me and said that they were a bit late in sending a proposal to the universal acceptance group. Would it be possible to consider it, considering it's coming from the Pacific, etc.? Obviously, to review it and not discard it.

SATISH BABU:

Right. I can check on it. What's happened this year is that last year, we accepted four applications. This year, we have 113. So there's been a surge in the number of applications. But if we have this case of, from Pacific, we have an application that is slightly delayed, let me take it up. Today, we're going to have the first meeting to decide on the principles on how to evaluate the proposals. Then we're going to actually start the evaluation.

For the evaluation, this time it is slightly different from last time because this time, the [combination] group has invited participation for different AC/SOs in the evaluation process. So we have actually requested At-Large to provide us with three reviewers who will join the

team of people who are coding these proposals. But on this particular proposal, I'll come back to you after checking with Sarai on that one.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Right. Thanks, Satish. Sarai, you could message Satish, even in the chat, which name the proposal came, just in case they can consider it, because that's a region where we want to focus on. So if anyone has any questions for any of the speakers, in case you've not understood something, etc., please raise it. But think about it until that time. If you could switch on your video. And Yeşim, can we have the screen down so that we can have others and whoever wants to take some pictures of this group? And let us know so that we look beautiful, Adarsh, in the photograph. We have to look good. Tell us when to be ready, Adarsh, because we cannot go on grinning for ages.

SATISH BABU:

Adarsh, you are muted.

ADARSH BU:

My bad. Yeah. Thanks. All right. One more to capture. Just a second. There.

JUSTINE CHEW:

Make sure you get more than one screen because I think this—

ADARSH BU:

Yeah. I'm starting the second one.

JUSTINE CHEW: Page three. Yeah. There's three pages of participants.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Are we done, Adarsh?

ADARSH BU: Yes. We are done. Yeah. We are good.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Okay. Thanks. So let's get back to business. And you can post it in the WhatsApp group and we'll pick it up from there. Before we go into the section wherein we have our members sharing more on what they have been doing, they are relatively new members—what they have been doing, whether it's aligned to ICANN, or what they plan to do in some five minutes-ish. In future, if you want to present for your ALS or something you have done, do let us know in advance so that we can plan the APRALO regional call in that manner.

Another request is Pavel, Bibek, and I are just in the final rounds of compiling the November-December newsletter. I know many of you have done certain things. Like for example, Babu has done—Babu and team—Vldao has had an IGF. [Raiyu] has an IGF and SIG, etc. If you could send some two, three lines and a picture of something, we will place it and show that, "Look, these are some things which our ALSes are doing."

Or anyone whom I've missed which is within ICANN's remit, please send it ASAP because we want to circulate the newsletter by tomorrow since everyone's going to go into a holiday—not many of us but ICANN will be going into a holiday so we want to send it. So please send it to Bibek, Pavel, and me or any of them. Bibek, I think is here. He can put his details into the chat. And with this, let's go over to Ashirwad Tripathy, who will be sharing more about what his ALS is doing. So Ashirwad, over to you.

ASHIRWAD TRIPATHY: Thank you, Amrita. And thank you, everyone, for this opportunity to express about my ALS. Can you see my screen?

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Yes. You need to go into sharing. Yes. This is it.

ASHIRWAD TRIPATHY: Okay. We are Educating Nepal, an ALS. We are working towards bridging socio-economic and digital divide. We do grassroots projects and research. We're mostly focused on underprivileged communities and hard-to-reach communities. So about me, I'm cofounder of Educating Nepal. I am vice-chair of APRIGF. I'm also involved with the Internet Society and IEEE Standards Association Industry Connections program on digital resilience. Regarding ICANN and fellowship, I am ICANN32 virtual fellow and APSIG 2021 fellow in Sri Lanka.

So about our NGO. We are an NGO registered in 2012, in December 21st, coincidentally today 11 years back. So happy [ani] to all as well. We got

our ALS accreditation in this April, eight months before. And as I said, we do grassroots projects, research, and advocacy.

In regards to grassroots projects, we are operating these schools that's operated through women empowerment and youth empowerment. [The fund goes to] schools so that it's free. We also focus on disaster resilience and economic independence. And in all the activities we do, Internet has a major role in it. We do also connect community networks to support our projects, using Internet as an enabler.

In terms of recent research, we've formalized a holistic framework on resilient e-education ecosystems as well as guidelines on how to implement a resilient education ecosystem in rural areas. That's done with IEEE. The whole resilience report can be found in the QR code there. Post-COVID, we've been working with IEEE on that as well.

And currently, we're focusing on Nepal can adopt the blended learning system. And we also have this future initiative that's fostering unity through understanding respect and engagement. So in that, we are collecting young people from 13 to 18 from all around the world—USA, UK, Nepal, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Ghana. So we're collecting young people and they are discussing on climate change, on resilient Internet. They are discussing on other things like how to be safe on social media and all those kind of things. We're also working for justification of terms and conditions for young people on social media engagement.

In terms of advocacy, we participate regularly in the Internet Governance Forum and other forums and events. And national level, as Amrita was talking before, we also have Digital Freedom Coalition made

in Nepal. This is the website. In the coalition, there's two ALSes. Babu does IGI and my Educating Nepal, we two are coalition partners in the Digital Freedom Coalition and we do regular events every year, four to five big events and some short discussions and other engagement programs.

So the recent one we did was an online, December. This is our event, Digital Freedom Summit. We do it every year. As summit partner, we also involved another ALS, Nepal Internet Foundation, Bikram [inaudible] organization [inaudible] event. Samira was there. [Inaudible] was there. And we discussed about nurturing [an inclusive] future. My ALS session was more focused on Internet fragmentation as well. And I'm happy to say that all the ALS members present in this meeting and from Nepal did come to that event and we had a very good collaboration and discussion during this event.

So the next step for us is, yes, we've applied for UA day funds to raise more awareness. We'll continue to do it in a collaborative way, with IGI, with IGF, and with other stakeholders in Nepal. And the other thing that we're working on as an ALS is to build a pilot project. To support the pilot project, we're looking for funds so that we can validate our research findings and build standards on digital education with IEEE, Internet Society, and in relation to unique identifiers of Internet. It relates to that. Also, ICANN.

So thank you so much, everyone. This was a brief introduction of my ALS and what we have been doing. So if there is any question, I'm happy to answer. Else, the next colleague might—

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Thanks, Ashirwad. Thanks for it and sharing the great work you all are doing. My request is do engage more in the community working groups, etc. Also, I need an update on that event you did in December because quite a few ALSes came together and did it. In 200 words, with a picture, ASAP. We want to release our newsletter. From now, I request to all. Please share the great work you are doing so that we can publish it. Next, we go to Amin, who is the youngest ALS for us—youngest as in the ALS is the last-formed ALS for us. So Amin, over to you. Do share a bit about your organization, what you’ve been doing, and how you plan to do things aligned with ICANN.

AMIN HACHA: Hi, again, to all. Thank you, Amrita, for this opportunity and for the group to let us introduce briefly about us. Being young is very important. You are all young. Through my experience of many participants in this community and group, you are all young.

Anyway, as personal, I am Amin Hacha speaking and I’m from Lebanon. I’m living part of my time in Venice, in Italy. And my background is programming fashion design. And I am the co-chair of Middle East Space. Also, I am member in the executive committee of NCUC.

And at Lebanese Cyberspace, we are founded in 2014 to promote a safe and secure cyberspace in Lebanon. Our purpose it to raise awareness about cybersecurity, [trade], and educate about responsible Internet use. Also, we educate about policies that support a free and open Internet for all. We have a consultative status [inaudible] in the United

Nations. And we've had this status through, I think, 2014 in IGF in Istanbul was the first. And also, we are active in [APRiGF] Asia. As a person, I am member in Lebanese [MAC].

And Lebanese Cyberspace also is part of organizing Lebanese IGF and it's part of the planning to be done last month in Beirut. But because of war and the situation around us, we postponed until 30 and 31 January. I don't know if I mixed my ... I didn't prepare a presentation or some picture of our activity.

But also, Lebanese IGF with ICANN are very collaborating since long time in Lebanon. So when it was Internet School in Lebanon 2016 or the presentation, DNS and many subjects, we had already collaborating with ICANN every time together in [make awareness of multistakeholder].

I think this [makes the ambition] of what we are doing. But we are looking, me and the members at Lebanese Cyberspace, to work with you all. And we are open for any opportunity we can be part to support and collaborate on this. I hope I give you a briefing about us. And I think when we continue working together, we will know each other more. Thank you for listening.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Thank you, Amin. Thank you for sharing and introducing your ALS with us. We hope to see you and your ALS members also engaged in APRALO. This is something which even we would get to know what is the great work you are doing. You and the other members would also get to know what's being discussed in ICANN, what is of importance for the

Lebanese community, etc., and contribute. So welcome, here. I do hope you will be active in the mailing list. I have shared the link to the WhatsApp group also because the conversations are more informal but it moves faster. It's great to hear from you. And I see Satish raising his hand. So Satish, if you have a question, over to you.

SATISH BABU:

Yeah. I have a question. Thanks for the update, Amin. Talking of coincidence, today there is a meeting of the ICANN Board—a special meeting. One of the agendas in that meeting is the .LB. Very unusual situation of .LB, the Lebanese ccTLD. That ccTLD was managed by a person working for the American University and he died. And American University said they cannot continue to look after the domain. So ICANN had to decide. And today's meeting, they are handing that domain over to the Internet Society Lebanon. Do you have any connection with the ISOC chapter there?

AMIN HACHA:

Yes. We are in contact with ISOC Lebanon. I am a member in ISOC Lebanon. But about the .LB, it's a long history. I think it's [a lot] more than 2025 here. There are [inaudible] conflict [or combat] between [inaudible] who passed, unfortunately, a few months ago, and the Lebanese governor. I remember in February of 2013 when president of ICANN, Fadi Chehade, chair of ICANN, he visit Lebanon. It's a long discussion.

As a Lebanese community, always we are very looking and will be happy when the .LB will have the stability for a good future. I don't have a lot

of details or information about how the process [of updating] is coming in the last few months. I have very small information on this subject. But I think what I know, most of the community in ICANN [around] know about this. This is my answer.

ALI ALMESHAL:

If you would allow me, Amin and Satish. Sorry I did not raise my hand because I'm on mobile. Nicolas from Lebanon ISOC, he attended the GA in Istanbul with us as well. He coordinated some of the activity. And he attended as well in Hamburg to finalize this. I believe that he is coordinating all of those activities. I don't know, guys, if you remember him—the tall guy. He's a [selfie] guy [inaudible]. And he's taking care of that with the [port], I believe. Thank you.

SATISH BABU:

Thanks, Ali.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Thank you so much. Now we move to Ghayoor Bawary who is from ISOC Afghanistan. Bawary, one thing which you will have to do is Umar is still mentioned as the ALS representative. But since he is [inaudible] foundation, I think you will have to write to APRALO staff and have it moved to either you or whoever is concerned for ISOC Afghanistan because they are the ALS of APRALO. But we will now hear from Ghayoor who is based in Afghanistan. They are doing some excellent work, given the trying times they have out there. So Ghayoor, over to you to share a bit more of what you all have been doing.

GHAYOOR BAWARY:

Hi, again. Thank you so much, Amrita. From my side, good morning and good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for the opportunity. I'm volunteering as chair of the Internet Society Afghanistan since 2020. ISOC Afghanistan, established in 2016, brings together key Internet stakeholders to discuss the most pressing issues around Internet governance, development, openness, and accessibility.

So we create a platform for diverse Internet stakeholders to discuss policies, plans, and programs facilitating engagement from the local community and dialog related to the Internet. We work with the global technical community to ensure transfer of knowledge and experiences. Our initiatives help build knowledge, skills, and enhance collaboration.

The Afghanistan IGF is a relatively new IGF. Afghanistan School on Internet Governance, [Kids] Academy, Girls in [IT], Tech Women are such initiatives that we have been undertaking since 2017. Some of these initiatives have been organized separately as an event. Some of them have been covered in our national IGF sessions.

The fourth edition of the significant events this year in 2023, the virtual format of IGFA 2023, the AFSIG 23, the AFNOG [formation, integration] was a resumption of the annual forum after three years of a break due to the global pandemic and then subsequent political challenges in the country.

So this year in our virtual workshops, we discussed many areas from the Internet accessibility and connectivity, to cybersecurity, data protection, [Internet] literacy, data inclusion, to improving the quality of online

content, with the input from many collaborators and experts. We discussed ways in which individuals, businesses, and communities can focus on creating an open, safe, and secure online environment.

And our three-day event, Afghanistan School of Internet Governance 23, started on 4th of December and ended on 5th of December. It was held for two days. And on 6th December, we had our national IGF [inaudible] 2023. This was our first time experiencing organizing a virtual event, completely online. We had more than 200 registrants for all of our events and sessions. For example, for the AFSIG, for national IGF. The YouthIGF was covered under the national IGF. And also the integrated—the Afghanistan Network Operators Group, for the first time in its formation right now.

So we will be certainly seeking support from our partners, especially from the global technical communities. We have also discussed the role of ICANN, APNIC, ISOC, IGF, [inaudible], IEEE, and the APNIC Foundation on Internet Development, Operation, and Security. So we will be planning our next national IGF to be held as a hybrid if the situation allows and permits. You know better the situation. So we'll be looking for your support from all the stakeholders from the international communities to provide us speakers, moderators, a trainer. We are looking for partners.

And also, one of the challenges right now for us is getting funds in Afghanistan because the wire transfer of funds is under sanction. So we cannot directly receive payments from not organizations who are supporting us or helping us financially. So we have been in discussion with the IGFSAs, with the [India] IGF, if we can get their support to be

one of the [secretariat]—our national IGF, the Internet Society Afghanistan, to receive the funds from those organizations who have sponsored us behalf of our organization. And then, they can directly pay to the vendors who will be providing us services.

So this is form me. If there's any question, happy to answer. Thank you. Over to you, Amrita.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Thank you so much, Ghayoor. What, from APRALO, we can do [inaudible] on that is we have called the Policy Forum or a special discussion, wherein your members of the community, you can encourage your community members in Afghanistan who are interested to participate and learn about the policy aspects. Similarly, ICANN has various forces, etc.—technical forces and others—which they can go through, based upon their interest. Or even various At-Large initiatives which happen, they can participate on them online if they want. So it would be good if you spread the information of what's happening, etc. Those who are interested, they can join and contribute. This is our small way of helping.

If some technical sessions on DNS abuse, etc., needs to be held, we could obviously think of helping to organize or facilitating with the ICANN GSE Team. So we are there to help you in our limited ways. We know those are challenging times for you all. But wherever possible, we'll try to help you all. So thanks so much, Ghayoor, for coming in. And if you can send two, three lines about these initiatives to me, we would

want it in the newsletter. I know about it but lines from your ALS helps us.

GHAYOOR BAWARY: Sure.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: So with that, we move to Faheem Soomro, who is an individual member. So Faheem, if you could share what you have been doing, and what interested you to APRALO, and how you plan to contribute.

FAHEEM SOOMRO: Thank you, Amrita. Hi, everyone. Can you hear me guys? Please confirm if everybody is hearing me.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Yes, we can. It's a bit muffled. If you can speak a bit more clearly, I think that [would be good].

FAHEEM SOOMRO: All right. Thank you, Amrita, for providing me with the opportunity to share my thoughts. While attending APRALO and ICANN meetings, I've always been on the agenda. And I have been doing so for a while. It's not just about staying informed. I see it as the chance to connect with other members, learning from their experiences and build a network.

I will soon be joining APF, CPWG and OFBWG working groups. Thank you, Justine and Amrita, for their guidance. Well, working collaboratively on ICANN's initiatives or topics seems like a great way to contribute effectively. And I want to actively participate in discussions with APF, CPWG, and OFBWG, whether it's on mailing lists or other forums, because I believe sharing ideas and asking questions can bring [inaudible] to the table.

In a nutshell, I'm here to learn, [share], and work collaboratively to make a positive impact on the Internet landscape globally. However, I'm eager to explore the various ways in which APRALO can offer support and guidance to enhance my involvement and let me glean some areas where I believe your insight will make a real difference. I'm keen to understand more about ICANN processes, policies, and activities. And just wanted to know. Are there any upcoming learning sessions or workshops that could help me navigate the complex landscape?

At the same time, I have been learning some courses pertinent to policy development and writing public comments on the adopted policies via ICANN Learn platform. I'm passionate about contributing to policy discussions within ICANN and [inaudible] to share contribution on the Fiscal Year 25-29 [doc] shared by Mr. Shah Rahman. I think it's a good start. It's a good place for me to start.

And your guidance means a lot to me. And I believe that with your support, I can make the most meaningful impact within ICANN. Thank you for your time and you can ask any question.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Thank you so much, Faheem. Do you come from a technical background, or a legal background, or are you working on public policy? A bit about yourself. What are you involved in?

FAHEEM SOOMRO: Yeah. Ma'am, I am from technical background. I am currently working as area manager within the fiberoptic network maintenance team. I've been a part of this team for more than 10 years. We really engage with planning, implementation, and maintenance of fiberoptics and IT networks.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Okay. Thanks so much for this, Faheem. I think in terms of upcoming, what I could share is Ali is planning to have an organized discussion, sometime early next month and next year on the two policy papers which Shah was referring to on ICANN Strategic and Financial plans, etc., for 2025. So that's something. Ali will start working on it, planning it up. And more details on that will be shared very soon. And the policy forum has various discussions which are happening. So from APRALO, there are many things which are planned. And it is always shared in the mailing list and in the WhatsApp group so you would get to know there.

ICANN has their own calendar. So if you've not subscribed to ICANN news, where they have updates coming whenever things happen, you could keep track. There are blogs where you have different updates coming. So to keep yourself abreast about what's happening in ICANN, what webinars are coming, you could get information from there, as well as the mailing list, as well as the different courses which ICANN has

to offer, or even APNIC has since you have a technical background. APNIC also has a few technical courses, etc., for the networking and other things. So you could look at those.

So thank you, everyone, for sharing your updates, etc., on what you're doing, what you plan to do. I know a lot of you—Lado, especially for you, you had your IGF. If you could share an update of your IGF. Send us briefly, two, three lines with a photograph. We will add it to the newsletter. That would help us. And if you want to be spotlighted in the January monthly call, let us know in advance what you've been doing. Like Bikram shared with me, they've been doing some podcasts, etc. So if you quickly want to share, Bikram, two minutes of what you've been doing, the community may be happy to hear about it.

BIKRAM SHRESTA: Thank you, Amrita.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Yes. Continue.

BIKRAM SHRESTA: Basically, we are doing, in Nepal ... One initiative is Digital Nepal Framework we have in 2018. And 2018, from that onwards, there is no activity from the government. But from the civil society, we want to raise a voice. And then we started this podcast. It's almost 17 episodes we have already broadcast but in different sectors.

In Digital Nepal Framework, there is eight sectors and 80 initiatives. So in eight sectors, there is education, tourism, finance, health, energy, tourism, urban infrastructure. So we want to highlight these all in our podcast and [inaudible] we have three episodes in one sector—from the civil society voice, from the government voice, and from the business or private sector voice.

So that's how we have started this Digital Nepal Framework and these [inaudible]. The Digital Nepal Framework, there is one mission, eight sectors, and 80 initiatives. So we want to have different voices from the different communities. That's how we started.

And one more thing. We are doing Everest Community Network. The Everest Community Network is one of the highest community networks in the world. It's over 4,000 meters high. That is still going on. We have completed the first phase. And then the second phase, we are laying out the fiber in Khunde and Khumjung villages, so about 4,000 meters high. Thank you, Amrita, for giving me this opportunity.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Thank you so much, Bikram, especially the community network, etc., for connecting people with Internet society. Those are really great stuff that you're doing. And for everyone, if any month you are doing something, please send it to Pavel, Bibek, and me so that we can update it. We want to show the great diverse work our community members are doing, which many can go unreflected. And yes, Justine. You have your hand up.

JUSTINE CHEW:

Yes. Thank you, Amrita. I just want to make a quick comment here that it's very useful to hear all this updates and for us to then go back and see what areas different ALSes and individual members are working on because these, I consider data points for one of the projects that has been stalled for various reasons, which is the Register of Skills and Interests.

This project is actually to try and collect data about our ALS members—the reps and members, as well as individual members—so that we can try and decipher what possible area of expertise you might have. And when APRALO goes and asks for input about a certain topic that falls in your area of expertise, we can actually target you or tap you on the shoulder and ask you what you think, rather than do a general call for anyone and everyone. I think it's easier to get the answers that we are looking for or the inputs—the accurate inputs that we are trying to get from people who are working in those areas.

And then we bring your inputs back to the greater APRALO and say, “Hey, someone has contributed this input. Do we agree with it? Can we put it as APRALO perspective or input or whatever? Then that goes into the next process that it's supposed to go into.” So please do share whatever you're doing and what your areas of expertise are, whether it's in the call or whether it's in the form of newsletter that Amrita's asking for, because I can tell you that I actually look at these kind of things. So I'd be very interested to see all these sources of datapoints that can be very useful for me. Thank you.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Thank you, Justine. Yes. These are important, what everyone is doing. Perhaps later, we can have a map created where our ALSes can share, “We are working on these things or these,” and we can map that, based upon the skill.

Thank you, Cheryl, for joining in. Be safe. And yes, take some time off. But before we move, Lado, do you want to share something now? I saw you in the chat. Briefly, if you could speak what you’ve been doing. And I need a mail from you on what you’ve been doing. Over to you, Lado. Lado, you are muted.

VLADIMER SVANADZE: Yes. Hi, everyone. Hope you are well. Thank you, Amrita. Sorry. What about I will send by e-mail to you about my activity for new newsletter with my photo. Okay? Or can I talk about it here?

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Yes.

VLADIMER SVANADZE: Okay. I will be very brief, okay? This year, I have some new challenge for me because I moved to academic sector. Then I will implement a new study model of Internet governance and cyber-diplomacy. In the parallel of this, I published also my book in Georgian language. It’s about the new challenge of cyberspace in Georgia. And at this moment, I began my work on Internet fragmentation in the end of August, mostly on political fragmentation, not just on technical and commercial fragmentation.

And the work about this, I will speak at the Georgian IGF and moderate and organize. I was only in the organize committee. And I speak about Internet fragmentation. In Georgia, it was a very big event. And it was a Georgian Information Technology Innovation. I was there also, some speaker and talk about Internet fragmentation, both political fragmentation. Amrita, for me, it will be good if I send you by e-mail about my activity, okay?

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Yes. Thank you so much. And for everyone, I hope you enjoyed this call. I enjoyed it, getting an update on what the working groups are doing, what all the ALSes are doing, the diverse things which you all are doing. I hope it was meaningful for you to be here for the 90 minutes. We want to make your time meaningful and help you. So in case you want anything specific to be discussed in the January monthly call, please let us know. We will try to assimilate it. And if there is something you would want us to add more, we are open to your comments.

With that, we would like to wish you a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year in advance, or happy holidays. And those like me, who are still working over these next few days until the new year, well happy working to all of us. And I will hand it over to Yeşim. Yeşim, when is our next call?

YEŞİM SAĞLAM:

Thanks so much, Amrita. Give me one second please. It's not on the calendar for the next call. Normally, we are doing fourth Thursday of the month. So it's going to be the 25th of January at 6:00 UTC as usual.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Okay. Thank you. 25th January is the date for now for our next APRALO call. Let us know before, at least by 10th, in case there is anything specific—10th or 15th—that you would want us to discuss. If any of you personally want to come and speak about your ALSes, rather than us hunting out, you can let us know. So bye-bye and have a nice time. And Sarai, don't make me Madam. I look like a grand old lady when you say "madam" to me. Bye, then.

YEŞİM SAĞLAM: Thank you all very much for joining today's meeting. This meeting is now adjourned. Have a great rest of the day. Happy holidays for everyone and Merry Christmas to those who celebrate. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]