

**High Level Meeting of Governments at the 45th Meetings of the Internet Corporation for Assigned
Names and Numbers (ICANN)
Preserving and Improving the Multistakeholder Model
Toronto, Canada, October 15, 2012**

Report of the Chair

1. Introduction

On October 15, 2012, senior officials and representatives from 50 countries and 3 observer organisations, attended the first High Level Meeting (HLM) as part of the 45th meeting of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). The HLM strengthened a collective understanding and awareness of ICANN and the varied public policy issues relating to the coordination of names and numbers for the global Internet.

The open discussions among senior officials, and with the ICANN leadership and stakeholder groups, were structured around the important theme of affirming the importance of “Preserving and Improving the Multistakeholder Model”. The HLM succeeded in identifying future priorities for the ICANN multistakeholder model as well as the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC), in order to further globalise ICANN and increase its accountability and transparency. Among the priorities discussed by the High Level Meeting were building capacity for developing countries and ensuring ICANN’s organisational capacity for the successful implementation of the generic Top Level Domain (gTLD) program.

The HLM was divided into several sessions and included presentations by the ICANN President and CEO, the Chair of the Board of Directors and the Chair of the Governmental Advisory Committee. In addition, the chairs of the Supporting Organisations and Advisory Committees briefed the HLM about their respective stakeholder groups. There was also a very positive exchange with the ICANN Board.

The High Level Meeting was hosted by the Government of Canada with the Governmental Advisory Committee at ICANN, in line with the recommendation made by the first Accountability and Transparency Review Team, to increase the support and commitment of governments to the GAC and ICANN.

2. Multistakeholder Model

The Chair summarised the views of HLM regarding the ICANN multistakeholder model, to affirm:

- the importance of the ICANN multistakeholder model and the roles and responsibilities of civil society, the private sector, the technical community and governments to safeguard a stable, secure and resilient Internet and Domain Name System that is open and decentralised.
- the role of governments in the ICANN multistakeholder process to advise on public policy issues related to the coordination of the names and numbers for the Internet via the GAC, and to reinforce the critical need for government views and priorities to be taken fully into account in ICANN’s decision-making.

Governmental Advisory Committee

Significant progress has been made in expanding the membership and capacity of the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC). Participation in GAC decision-making has increased, with 120 members as well as 25 observer organizations contributing regional and expert views. ICANN-funded interpretation

and translation into the 6 languages of the United Nations, plus Portuguese, and an increase in the number of fellowships to 20 per meeting have made a considerable impact on building capacity and increasing inclusivity in the GAC. The High Level Meeting recognised:

- the need to continue to build on existing progress to strengthen the GAC's operations, its working methods, and its efficiency to make sure that the GAC is a strong representative of governmental advice.
- the need to bring quality advice and positions to the GAC, and the importance of domestic mechanisms, and sufficient resources, to facilitate the engagement of all stakeholders in the issues that touch on domestic policies that are discussed and addressed by the GAC.

3. Globalisation

The joint work of the GAC and the Country Code Names Supporting Organisation at ICANN resulted in the creation of a “fast track” for Top Level Domains in non-Latin script or Internationalised Domain Names, making them available for the first time on the Internet starting in 2010. This joint effort serves as a clear example of a very successful collaboration between the GAC and another stakeholder group at ICANN. There are now more than 30 such new country code Top Level Domains.

The current generic Top Level Domain program will make generic Internationalised Domain Names available for the first time. However, concerns have been raised about the low level of awareness and participation from developing countries in the gTLD program. This is paralleled by, and may be symptomatic of, low levels of awareness of and engagement with ICANN processes more generally in some countries.

ICANN should look at new ways to engage smaller countries or countries that are less well resourced. The High Level Meeting identified several areas of focus to enable further globalization of ICANN:

- Further development of targeted strategies for Africa, Latin America and other regions to enable broader participation in ICANN from developing and small island countries and greater awareness of generic Top Level Domains in developing countries in future rounds.
- Provision of fellowships, technical assistance and enhancing the way that ICANN conducts outreach, in order to encourage and support broader participation.

4. Accountability and Transparency at ICANN

In taking stock of the first ICANN Accountability and Transparency Review that concluded at the end of 2011, the HLM agreed that sound progress has been made at ICANN in implementing the recommendations.

There have been notable improvements in terms of the communications between the ICANN Board and the GAC. For example, the GAC scorecard of consensus advice in 2011 led to an effective open process of consultations with the Board, which has resulted in a program that is much more responsive to public policy considerations. In fact, 90% of GAC advice was accepted by the Board as a result of these consultations.

In addition, the GAC register of advice to the Board is beginning to have a direct impact on working methods and operational effectiveness by allowing GAC advice to the Board, and Board responsiveness to this advice, to be tracked and openly accessible to the ICANN community.

In terms of contract compliance, the GAC has advised about the need for improvements to the resourcing and structural arrangements available to support compliance efforts at ICANN. The High Level Meeting took note of:

- the recent organizational changes so that the Contract Compliance function now reports directly to the President and CEO of ICANN, as well as the status of the negotiations to enhance the provisions of the agreements to accredit the generic name registrars, to better take into account the recommendations made by law enforcement and endorsed by the GAC.

The HLM also acknowledged ICANN's efforts and the oversight of the ICANN Board to:

- improve ICANN's ethics and conflict of interest framework at ICANN, including the effectiveness and enforceability of these mechanisms.

The High Level Meeting also:

- reinforced the need for operational competency regarding implementation of the generic Top Level Domain program overall.

Priorities for the next Accountability and Transparency Review

HLM participants commented that the recommendations of the first review, particularly those related to the GAC, should be implemented as soon as possible. As the next Review Team will begin its work early in 2013, the Meeting outlined accountability and transparency issues in addition to the points previously outlined in this report:

- Enabling engagement of the GAC as early as possible, and at various levels, within the ICANN policy development process.
- Improvements to financial accountability mechanisms in accordance with the increase in revenues resulting from the generic Top Level Domain program.