**ICANN**

**Moderator: Maryam Bakoshi**

**January 28, 2016**

**4:00 am CT**

Coordinator: The recording has started.

Maryam Bakoshi: Thank you very much (Martin). Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. This is the Pre NCPH Intercessional Meeting Briefing on Thursday the 28th of January, 2016. On the call today we have Julf Helsingius, Mark McFadden, Olevie Kouami. And from staff we have Benedetta Rossi, Robert Hoggarth and myself, Maryam Bakoshi. I would like to remind all participants to please state your name before speaking for transcription purposes. Thank you very much, over to you, Rob.

Rob Hoggarth: Thanks very much, Maryam. This is Rob Hoggarth. Welcome, everybody, to our first - literally first NCPH intercessional briefing meeting. This is going to be our third intercessional meeting of community leaders from the Non-Contracted Party’s House of the GNSO. And over time we’re learning bit by bit how to fine tune and improve the process.

And one of our brainstorms from the planners this year was to have this introductory call for folks who are attending the meeting for the first time to give some background, some idea about the program logistics and agenda so that you’d all feel a bit more comfortable when you gather with the rest of the leaders next week in Los Angeles.

So what I’d like to do is turn the mic over briefly to my colleague, Benedetta Rossi, and let you, Benedetta, run us through the agenda for the meeting and otherwise get us kicked off. So if you could do that that would be great, thanks.

Benedetta Rossi: Thank you very much, Rob. Let me just change the slides. Okay well under - let me just turn to the agenda. So on the screen here you can see a screenshot of the meeting agenda to get a feel of what the agenda will look like during the meeting. The different days will be structured as follows. There will be breakfast served daily in the Doubletree Hotel which is the venue hotel for all delegates in the restaurant area between 8:30 am and 9:00 am.

All meetings will kick off at 9:00 am in the hotel conference room and will be broken down into different slots by topic, as you can see on the screen. Each slot of the agenda will be run by two different cochairs so one cochair will be from one of the side house so one from the Commercial side and one from the Non-Commercial side. The purpose of having the two cochairs is to have a balanced representation of the house and to facilitate the group’s discussion on each relevant topic.

Every session will have remote participation capabilities that includes Adobe Connect like (unintelligible) recordings and transcripts. And all these items will be facilitated by ICANN staff. And all the recordings will then be posted on the NCPH Intercessional Wiki space.

Lunch for delegates will be served outside the conference room and delegates will be able to bring it back into the room to continue their - the working lunch sessions on both days. When I say both days, I’m referring to the main meeting days so the Thursday and Friday, 4th and 5th of February.

And then in the morning and in the afternoon there will also be coffee and snacks served outside of the conference rooms to keep the delegates going during the long meeting days.

Upon arrival at the hotel all delegates will receive a hard copy of the program agenda and that will include all relevant information, everything you need to know basically for the meeting so the meeting times, the rooms, etcetera, and other useful materials in preparation for the meeting so please don't worry about retaining the time of breakfast or anything else that I might have said in terms of logistical items.

On Thursday evening ICANN will hold a reception in the Doubletree Hotel as a networking opportunity for delegates. So obviously you would be told about this once you're on site and where you need to gather. In terms of the meetings, all of the meetings will take place at the group in the Doubletree Hotel main conference room except for that constituency or stakeholder group breakout sessions on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning.

Thursday's breakout session will be different for the CSG and the NCSG, that was a decision of the community planning team. So for example the Non-Commercials will meet at constituency level for the NCUC and NPOC, whereas the CSG will meet as a group.

On Friday's breakout sessions they are currently tentatively scheduled for the morning at a stakeholder group level to prepare for the CEO session which each stakeholder group will meet with the CEO separately. So while one group is meeting with the CEO the other group will be preparing for their meeting.

And Rob, can you please clarify why these sessions are currently tentative, and see if you have anything else to add about the program agenda?

Rob Hoggarth: Thanks a lot, Benedetta. Yeah, the reason why there's one area of the agenda that is subject to some potential change is that one of the features of this meeting is to connect community leaders with ICANN senior staff. When we had the first meeting three years ago as part of this pilot effort we had a heavy dose of senior staff participation. It was Fadi Chehadé’s first full year as ICANN CEO, we had a lot of new senior executives. And the planners for that initial meeting thought it would be really good to have briefings from those folks.

It turned out that in terms of balance folks felt like they were just basically sitting through two days of lectures because it was almost a parade of updates on the different departments, on different teams and the rest here you so the second meeting that was held last year in Washington DC the decision was made to try to fine tune that a bit and focus on more action type items, get more action oriented briefings. And of course the meeting last year was two years into Fadi’s term and so the basics, the foundational information wasn't really necessary.

What they community leaders have really liked up until now is to have the individual opportunities as a stakeholder group to talk with senior execs, to share their particular areas of interest because even though we've reduced this meeting to the non-contracted parties there's still a variety of different points of view and perspectives. And so the right balance seems to be SG by SG; CSG for one session, NCSG for the other.

The complication this year is that the ICANN Board is meeting at the beginning of the week in Singapore for their workshop. And many senior staff are going to be there. And after the meeting and they will be traveling back to their various offices including Los Angeles. The bottom line here is that Fadi’s itinerary at present shows that he will be back in Los Angeles for the morning but, you know, we try to plan for all eventualities and in this particular case looks like we've got a close call in terms of his travel.

So we are going to stay flexible. That session may move to the afternoon. That remains to be seen. Flexibility is one of the hallmarks at least of the first two meetings that we had. And given that it's a smaller group and everybody is there for really a roll up your sleeves and work type of atmosphere we are just leaving that open. The critical matter is that at some point during the meeting you have the opportunity to chat with Fadi and if we need to slide that because of logistics we will do so.

That’s that piece, Benedetta.

Benedetta Rossi: Thank you very much, Rob. Does anyone have any questions so far about the meeting program or agenda if we move back to the meeting origins, purpose and planning process?

Rob Hoggarth: Thanks, Benedetta. This is Rob. I think that was a good start. And, you know, at any point during the rest of this call if you do have a question, Julf and, Mark, I know you're in the Adobe Connect room, you can just raise your hand and, Olevie, you can otherwise indicate to Maryam that you want to ask a question that would be great.

Yeah, let's step back for a second just for me to give you some context about the origins and purpose of where this meeting came from. For many years ICANN through its operational processes and specifically the annual operating plan and budget, created a separate mechanism that's been mostly referred to as the special community budget request process. And basically that process was established probably about six or seven years ago now to give individual communities the opportunity for almost laser-like contributions to the annual budget.

You know, when you're talking budgets of tens of millions of dollars sometimes some of the smaller more focused programs can get lost in the weeds. And the purpose of this quote unquote (venting) process if you will allows for some more laser-like considerations of new approaches, new initiatives, the ability to test out different ways of operating or additional set of resources that were needed by individual communities.

One of the common themes that kept coming up was a desire on the part of particular non-contracted parties in the GNSO to have an opportunity to get together outside the bounds of the regular ICANN public meeting. You know, for those of you who attended many ICANN public meetings or even just a few, you realize that it's a true marathon in terms of trying to schedule, get people together. There's a tremendous amount of stress in terms of people wanting to cover various items, participate in public sessions.

And really the opportunity for quiet, thoughtful, longer-term strategic discussions simply isn't available in the calendar in the schedule. Granted, ICANN is moving to a new meeting strategy that is being implemented for the first time at the Marrakesh meeting here in several weeks. But, you know, the recognition was that individual communities wanted this extra time.

The challenge we have is that every community submitted their requests almost unilaterally and they say we need for our particular group, we need this particular session. And when senior staff started to look at how that might be handled logistically it was just not going to be possible operationally to have, you know, seven or eight separate intercessional meetings all, you know, expecting some input from staff and certainly staff support or secretariat support.

So the concept, or at least the pilot idea was to see if we could combine these meetings, you know, have a general area or session for them to take place and to do them all at one time. That idea germinated a bit and the major focus at least for the GNSO perspective came down to the fact that the non-contracted parties seem to represent any operational group that would allow ICANN to test this idea.

And so we proposed it and tested it back in 2013 for the first time in Los Angeles. I think it's safe to say that we were all, both staff and community leaders, somewhat curious about how it would work, whether we would be able to pull it off. I provided in this slide a couple photographs of what the first meeting looked like.

We did it in the ICANN offices in Los Angeles. The office had just opened probably a few months before that time so it was really a neat opportunity for many community leaders who had never had the opportunity to see ICANN’s headquarters to come together.

The challenge was we had to get very inventive with the layout of the rooms. And the photographs show to double rows of tables facing each other across the room with a U sort of a staff support and AV support at the end where the photos were taken.

And overall the feedback on the meeting was positive. But as I indicated to you all there was the sense that wow, we were just sort of sitting there listening to lectures and there wasn't the back-and-forth that the group really liked.

A couple of things that came out of the meeting where the value of having the overall group together but to also balance that with individual meeting time as well. You know, there weren't, quote unquote, negotiations that take place or taking place at this first meeting but there was a recognition that wow, we're all together in the same city, at the same time that, even within our own specific communities and the sense to have breakout sessions was fairly strong.

That evolve to the second meeting for us to create an even more of a balance. And, you know, from a programming perspective have both plenary sessions and breakout session opportunities.

For the second meeting, which took place in Washington DC last January, an additional feature that was added to the program and again as an experiment because this is a learning evolutionary process, a number of the group said well since we are all here in the same city at the same time can we extend our travel stay an extra day so that we can meet with local people who might have an interest in our community, who are influential in the issues that we are interested in that we like to speak with.

And so we added an additional component that focused on an additional day, not planned by staff, not really otherwise supported by staff but just to give the individual communities an opportunity to get together to focus on their issues.

That concept has continued here into that third meeting where, on the day before next Thursday and Friday, that Wednesday, there's been an opportunity for individual groups to schedule some time together. And a number of the communities have taken us up on that offer and will be meeting in the ICANN office.

The various goals I think that different communities bring to this meeting create a sense of dynamism I think in terms of what can take place. What was interesting that we saw that came into being last year was that the delegates brainstormed and came up with this concept of creating a communiqué that they would circulate to the board of directors after the meeting. The subject or topic of that last year was the GNSO review process. And that topic is going to be discussed again this year.

It's not clear to me from the planners right now that there will be a communiqué that comes out of this meeting. As part of the planning process I flagged that as a potential outcome to this meeting. But that hasn't been crystallized. And so that will remain to be seen I think whether there is a topic or a matter that you all discuss or decide merits some further community joint communication. And that's something that may be a result of this meeting, although it's not specifically planned. And again, interestingly enough it wasn't planned for the meeting last year.

You know, overall I think the major interest in not only getting together generally to talk about issues that's been expressed by the planners for this meeting but that continues and I think will continue for as long as we do these meetings is the overall sense that the non-contracted parties, because of their diversity, really need to maximize opportunities to work together. And you know, whether it results in a communiqué or otherwise just a better understanding about where the different groups are coming from, what their work plans are, where they're trying to go, is something that the various community leaders find of great value.

And I'm hopeful from the perspective of you all attending that certainly that information exchange, that increasing knowledge will be helpful. And I think otherwise the opportunities for networking, to chat and in formal session, as Benedetta noted we've tried to program in some social opportunities as well, I think is something that you will all find useful and I hope that we'll have a good experience on this.

Benedetta, is there anything that I'm leaving out in terms of origins, purpose or planning in the session or for the meeting?

Benedetta Rossi: No, I don't have anything to add about this. Thank you.

Rob Hoggarth: Thanks. I mean, the only other point that I'd like to make, and I'm constantly keeping my eye open for hands up, Julf and Mark, in the room, listen closely for you, Olevie, it's just that when we talk about the planning process and the overall look at this meeting, what's really important to emphasize is that this is the community’s meeting.

This year I felt that the staff played a slightly larger role in terms of helping and coordinating the planning process. But at the bottom line here this was a meeting that was, you know, desired and needed by the community so from a staff perspective our role is to be facilitators to help you all keep things on track, to have things organized by two otherwise really give free rein to you all as a group.

What Benedetta mentioned as she was going through the agenda, is that there are cochairs that are assigned to each of the sessions. And this was something that evolved for the second meeting in Washington last year that we continued for this year.

And the idea there is that you've got, for each session, individuals from each side of the house, each SG, to basically help plan the session, help moderate and facilitate the session in any way that they all see fit. As you see from the agenda, there is a mix of both substantive topic discussions on the issues discussions as well as some operational matters as well.

You know, again taking back the theme that at an ICANN public meeting is really not helpful to try to pull people together because of the pressures that the opportunity to talk about specific items and to resolve particular matters that haven't had the time or the oxygen to sort of be solved. And so for example, the community decision-making process about electing board seats and Council vice chairs is an important element of the conversation. So I think you'll see a lot of that.

I think from their perspective all of you being new what I've observed in terms of dynamics is that everybody is very open and happy to hear contributions from any member. Julf, you're in a slightly interesting role in that, you know, you're not expected to speak but your contributions are very welcome.

You know, the perspective I think that the community leaders had is that while there is a value in them improving their relationships and learning to work together and having a better understanding of their points of view, they also felt that it was important to involve the NCAs as well as Markus Kummer, the board member who represents or was selected by this House to serve on the board, to have that opportunity for interaction as well.

You will also note, in addition to those of us from staff who are going to be there from just a support perspective, participation from Fadi at certain points in the agenda, participation from David Olive the leader of the policy development support function at ICANN also provides some useful opportunities to help us as staff better understand about where you guys are all coming from as well.

So I'm hopeful that you will all feel and see and be able to participate in that spirit of information sharing, of being flexible in terms of discussing the agenda items and things like that and to otherwise learn as much as you can. And not to hesitate, please comment in terms of participation. My sense has always been that people view as much participation as possible being very valuable because this is a good and real opportunity for everybody to talk together.

I will pause there and see if there is any further areas of clarification or things that I can expand on so far. Seeing nothing, let me chat a little bit about the logistics. Benedetta touched on that area. Most of the meeting is going to take place at the Doubletree Hotel which is about four blocks, four city blocks I guess, from the ICANN office. You have to remember this is Los Angeles California so it's not the most walking friendly environment overall but it's a nice short walk from the hotel to the ICANN offices.

You will see that the ICANN offices in this growing and very new office development area about three -- what is it now -- four years ago or so when ICANN selected to move to this location, it was basically an empty field with maybe two buildings and it. And no overtime it's built up. And so there is a fairly direct walking route, there are many cabs and things for folks who may be short of time and whatever, if they want to get back and forth between the office and the meeting.

But the good news is that most of the activities are taking place directly in the Doubletree Hotel. So when you all get there and check-in you will get a handout from the front desk welcoming you, you will have a packet of materials just that you can reference and bring with you to the meeting. And the meetings are just taking place in the convention area of the hotel just on the second floor. And so it's very quick and easy. Breakfast is provided as part of the room and so we've allowed for time for you all to get a breakfast and not feel too stressed.

One of the features of the meeting atmosphere that passed planning groups have emphasized is we don't want to be starting at 6:00 am and ending at 11:00 pm. Again, this is an opportunity for us to get together, to not be stressed, to not be tired out. And that's why I hope in terms of the travel arrangements, the travel team has been flexible. And I know Benedetta has been helping out in that regard not to have you hopping off the plane and jumping directly into a meeting or having to run right out of the meeting and hop on a plane to head back home.

And so as you see, the schedule is not super jam packed from dusk to dawn or vice versa. And I think that that's an important consideration that we've taken into play. As Benedetta mentioned, there are two evening social activities that we've included. There has been, for the first two meetings, informal reception that takes place on the evening of the first night. And when I say formal, I mean program nailed in where we hope to include other guests. The community leaders have been asked to consider if there's any folks locally in Southern California or Los Angeles-area who they like to chat with to keep that open.

And what we thought would be a nice touch as well for this meeting, since it's at the headquarters, is to have just an informal reception for those folks who are around and are interested over at the ICANN offices essentially in the cafeteria or the café if you will, where there’s, you know, basically lunch tables and things like that for staff just for some wine, cheese, crackers, other light beverages for folks to mix and mingle on Wednesday evening. So we are planning that.

And I know a number of the communities are going to be in the ICANN offices for their meetings on Wednesday. And, Julf, you and Carlos and Markus are invited to that affair as well. That will be in your packet when you all check-in.

I see the smile here about the bulletproof vests, there, Julf. I'll let you figure out or I will let you interpret that better for me. It is -- I do smile sometimes in terms of folks coming to California or otherwise to the United States. For those who don't travel that much you, you know, expect that everybody is going to be having their handgun strapped to their waist or something like that.

But I think from a delegate perspective you certainly don't need any bulletproof vests. And from a atmosphere perspective in the Playa Vista area, it's very safe and wide-open. So, I mean, I frequently will walk back from the office late at night without any qualms. They keep you out of the park across the street. I think that's just to keep folks from camping out there overnight. Otherwise it's a very safe area. Yes, joking about the stereotypes. Yes, certainly there is quite a bit of that, definitely.

Benedetta, are there other logistical items that I'm leaving out the you would like to flag for the folks?

Benedetta Rossi: Well you've covered most of those logistic items that I had on my list. But the only other thing would be for more information about the planning process, you referred to the intercessional wiki space, into the screenshot, for those who are in the Adobe Connect room.

On the wiki space you will be able to find all the meeting documents and materials, the recordings from the planning process and all of the actual intercessional meeting recordings will also be posted here once the meeting takes place. It might also be a good idea for you to browse the space, to view materials from previous intercessional meetings if you'd like to get a sense of what the meetings were like and what was achieved, etcetera.

Yes, it's on the - thank you, Mark. It’s on the Web link pod as well but I will copy and paste it for you.

Rob Hoggarth: Benedetta, do you want to talk a little bit about - do you want to talk a little bit about some of the materials and sort of how those have evolved from last year to this year?

Benedetta Rossi: In terms of the materials the only materials that I've been working on, which I can brief the delegates about, is a document which will include information about the delegates. So I think that we have a screenshot of that later on. Yes, this is actually from last year's document. We haven't finalized this year's. So you will see everyone will have their picture, name, their location, ICANN affiliation and their title and company for their day jobs. So that will be a useful document to refer to just to familiarize yourself with anyone that you maybe haven't seen before.

So that's something that will be part of the packet of documents that will be printed as well as the meeting program and the different locations for the meetings. I don't have anything else to add about the materials, Rob.

Rob Hoggarth: Great. Thanks, Benedetta. The only other thing that I would note for you to keep thoughtful about is that something we introduced last year that we should have thought about the first year was an evaluation survey. It turned out to be very useful last year in terms of getting some feedback to help us improve the planning process for this year to help a little bit with some of the logistical planning and things like that. So we will have a survey again at the end of this meeting to ask you to evaluate the various sessions and things like that.

The idea there is to share that learning experience with the planners for next year so that we can, you know, make it a better experience. And you know, part of this all is, you know, sitting down and thinking it through with your community leaders so I hope you all are giving feedback, Olevie and Mark, to your groups in terms of the topics that are discussed and the full experience, not just the today program that the program that the individual communities conduct as well. That's how we will improve this over time.

I'm pleased to share that while this concept first started as a pilot which was essentially funded by that special community budget request process that I shared with you before, it's now become a core part of the budget and so this is part of our annual plan of staff to continue to offer the opportunity for these meetings.

You know, we skipped a year between 2013 and 2015 simply because there was one year they are where the ICANN public meetings were spaced in such a way that it didn't offer the opportunity for an intercessional meeting. You know, one of the challenges that we have with all of you, as members of a very active community, is that you've got your day jobs, you've got many other commitments, both professional and personal. And frankly, if the challenge to find the right balance to have people travel halfway around the world. Would you do it for a one-day meeting? No. But a two-day meeting with an extra half day or so of programming seems to be the right mix.

But in terms of evaluations, feedback, particularly for those of you who are now new to the process that's going to be very valuable because you come in, see this in a very fresh sense and I think would be able to provide some very useful input in terms of how this experience and session can be improved over time.

So we really look forward to seeing you all in person in Los Angeles next week. Let me throw it open one last time to see if there is anything else we can clarify for you or flesh out a bit if you've got a question, a concern or just a thought. If there is something that we should have covered that we have not we want to improve things for the next call we’ll have tomorrow with some other new attendees. I will wait as I see some typing in the AC room.

All right, well thank you both Mark and Julf for confirming in the AC room nothing else to be added. Don't want to keep you for an hour if we only need half. And so thank you all for listening in and participating here. We look forward again to see you all next week so safe travels and we will do our best to make sure the sun is shining in Southern California.

If anything comes up before that time please don't hesitate to reach out for Benedetta or for me particularly from a travel perspective or any other last-minute concerns that pop up. We’ll be available and ready to help. Thank you all very much. We’ll see you next week. Thanks, Maryam and thanks, Benedetta, for getting this all organized.

Maryam Bakoshi: Thank you very much everyone.

((Crosstalk))

Maryam Bakoshi: (Martin), you may now stop the recording please. Thank you very much.

Rob Hoggarth: All right. Bye-bye.

Maryam Bakoshi: Bye.

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