ICANN SSR-RT 2016

Letter of motivation – application for membership

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This is to express interest in becoming a member of the Stability, Security and Resilence Review Team of ICANN for the new activity of this Team starting in 2016.

I was a member and Chair of the SSR-RT that worked starting in 2010. It was a source of great pride to be able to produce a document of analysis and recommendations that was followed by ICANN by incorporating its substantial provisions into planning and operations, and to see them followed-up by other institutional reviews such as the Accountability and Transparency Reviews. This was only possible thanks to the enormous accumulation of expertise, the diversity, and the collaborative spirit with which the SSR-RT was endowed.

I have a great interest in contributing to the new assessment because I believe this is an important service to the Internet community, consistent with my trajectory and highly likely to draw a path that ICANN can follow to keep the DNS robust, stable, secure and resilient, within its mission.

The idea that I can make a contribution is based on my commitment, my experience in institution-building, in ICANN and the global Internet, and the ability I think I have to work in a technical-societal interface, with multidisciplinary, multicultural teams, and with an orientation towards expert technical contributions.

My experience in computing and related decision-making spans decades and is kept up to date by continued involvement in both fields. I have been a professor at UNAM (the National University of Mexico), a member of the Board of Directors of ICANN since the first elected Board and through 2008, Chair of the first SSR-RT, Trustee of the Internet Society, member of the Working Group on Internet Governance (2003-2005) and of the Advisory Group of the Internet Governance Forum. As academic CIO (director of academic computing services, the largest and most innovative institution of the country) the UNAM-CERT (at the time the only CERT in Mexico and one of only two in Latin America and the Caribbean) reported directly to me; I was a member of the first Advisory Group on Cybercrime in the country. At present I teach regular courses in my fields at undergraduate level, and on e-government, Information Society, National Digital Strategies, and IT and Telecommunications Law in graduate and certificate programs; some of the above includes Risk Management, Internet Architecture, DNS, Cybersecurity and Internet security, and related subjects. I am often called for opinions in major governmental processes and was lead oversight/co-participant in the first online, e-justice project of the Federal government of Mexico. I am a member of the multistakeholder Initiative Group on Internet Governance and have been a member of the Consultative Committee of NIC-MX, the .mx ccTLD manager.My recent publications (out or in press) are related to Internet Governance, Network Neutrality, multistakeholder governance and stewardship, and a review of the National Digital Strategy of Mexico. In July 2016

I was distinguished with the "Premio Trayectoria" (Lifelong Achievement Award) by LACNIC, for life-long services to the Internet in the Latin America and Caribbean region. I am a member of RSTEP as well.

In the ICANN and ISOC Boards and their committees, including the already mentioned SSR-RT, the Board Governance Committee, the Evolution and Reform Committee and the working group on ICANN's Role in the Internet Governance Ecosystem, I hope to have proved myself a hard-working, multilingual, cross-cultural team member, not afraid to express my own views and at the same time open to listen deeply to others and revising mine. My scientific formation and present work keep me in the habit of rigorous, critical thinking, demand of evidence, respect and search for technical expertise when it is needed beyond my own (often!), and well-founded explanation; my teaching and service career keep me disciplined in listening, expressing respectfully a full group's conclusions, and in the diplomacy and flexibility in face of uncertainty characteristic of non-deterministic, varied social systems.

My motivation for the 2016 cycle of the SSR-RT follows in a bit more detail:

For the 2016 cycle, I expect that the Review focus will again be set as strategic, at a level of aggregation appropriate to the mission and focused on the mid- and long term, not only on the tactical and strategic, while also remaining specific enough to be actionable. The previous cycle had among its arguable success factors a focus that was broader than an IT or IT-security audit, using all available information from that level in and around the organization, but was more specific to the DNS and therefore towards technology than a general corporate strategy review. The same should hold for the new cycle.

Much has happened since the previous review that has to be analyzed and assessed now. ICANN internally made significant changes to support its responsibility regarding stability, security and resilience of the DNS. Among these are a restructuring (or two) of its IT operation, taking DNS risk as a Board level responsibility through a (now closed) Working Group, making IANA efficient and transparent till a very high level of auditable operational optimization and customer satisfaction was achieved, and made the deployment of root server replication through anycast an ongoing, and generally welcome, activity.

Developments which were in their early stages in the 2010-2012/13 cycle have now taken place to full or large extents. Among them are new gTLDs, DNSSEC, IPv6, IPv4 exhaustion, a large increase of ICANN's global footprint, and compliance. The 2010 SSR warned about risks coming from these developments, proposed parameters or strategies to account for the attending risks and to manage them, and made possible to follow up on this management. 2016 is certainly a good time to assess progress so far and, depending on findings, propose strengthening new mechanisms or modifying the ways ICANN has been attending to them.

In ICANN's internal action there has also been a very serious development, the IANA-oversight transition, which was not foreseen to the full scale it is at now. The risks to ICANN – or its success – in this transition weigh heavily as risks or success opportunities for the global DNS.

The SSR-RT of 2010 analyzed the risk framework in three circles; the above refers to the innermost one, ICANN's own corporate operations. The two circles outside this, that is, the community that interacts with ICANN but is not under its corporate wing, and the Internet at large, have undergone huge changes. Many of these changes also weigh as risks to the global DNS's stability, security and resilience. The magnitude of DDoS attacks and the fact that increasingly some of them take place against the DNS; the tendency of some countries to look for Internet infrastructures under their government's control or at least hosted fully within their borders and jurisdiction; the intensified debate/collision of points of view around privacy, security (national, public, personal), the cyber-to-physical connection being more intensely scrutinized and used for attacks, and many others point to the need for a new risk analysis and new strategies.

I do clearly understand that the Terms of Reference and other guidance for the new SSR cycle are different from the 2010 and may further change as a consequence of the evolving IANA-oversight transition and attending changes in ICANN's bylaws, other applicable rules and practices.

I hope the SSR-RT of 2016 or SSR2 will be constituted again by experts in many fields, of different generations and cultures, disposed to working together and with the community in order to achieve optimal results.