AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ALAC Statement on Enhancing Accountability – Recommendations for Diversity

Introduction

Yrjö Lansipuro, ALAC Liaison to the GAC and Board Member of the European Regional At-Large Organization (EURALO), Bastiaan Goslings, ALAC Vice Chair and ALAC Member of the EURALO, Beran Dondeh Gillen, member of the African Regional At-Large Organization (AFRALO) and Judith Hellerstein, member of the North American Regional At-Large Organization (NARALO), developed an initial draft of the Statement on behalf of the ALAC.

On 14 December 2017, the first draft of the Statement was posted on its At-Large Workspace.

On that same date, ICANN Policy Staff in support of the At-Large Community sent a Call for Comments on the Statement to the At-Large Community via the ALAC Work mailing list.

On 03 January 2018, a version incorporating the comments received was posted on the aforementioned workspace and the ALAC Chair requested that Staff open an ALAC ratification vote.

On 09 January 2018, Staff confirmed that the online vote resulted in the ALAC endorsing the Statement with 14 votes in favor, 0 vote against, and 0 abstention. Please note that 93.33% (14) of the 15 ALAC Members participated in the poll. The ALAC Members who participated in the poll are (alphabetical order of the first name): Alan Greenberg, Alberto Soto, Andrei Kolesnikov, Bartlett Morgan, Bastiaan Goslings, Holly Raiche, Javier Rua-Jovet, John Laprise, Kaili Kan, Maureen Hilyard, Sebastien Bachollet, Ricardo Holmquist, Seun Ojedeji, Tijani Ben Jemaa. One ALAC Member, Hadia Elminiawi, didn't vote. You may view the result independently under: https://www.bigpulse.com/pollresults?code=414913EYcwJUx9M4Nn6JdLC7Gf.

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While supporting the recommendations for enhancing diversity as a whole, we want to focus on Language, which is one of the seven elements of diversity identified by WS2.

It is a laudable goal that "all languages should be possible to be represented in ICANN for the organization to position itself as a fully global multi-stakeholder entity". However, this is not achieved by improving the balance among the six official UN languages or even by occasionally adding a few other languages. Many important languages and billions of people are still left out.

Because it is not possible to cater for the wide diversity of languages, at least people who are not fluent English speakers should understand the English used as the working language of ICANN. This is why efforts to improve the quality of ICANN documents and presentation in order to enable informed, inclusive and meaningful participation are important also from a diversity point of view.

In order to communicate with a diverse community, it is necessary to explore other ways and means to bridge cultural and language barriers (in addition to translations), e.g. infographics, animations, videos that are langue-neutral or which can be localized by communities in their own cultural contexts. Infographics and pictures need to be accurately described in the meta tags or text attached to the picture so screen readers that are used by the visually impaired can understand and describe the picture.

Captioning is a particularly useful tool to help people whose native language is not English and for those with disabilities. It would also help those whose remote participation at ICANN events is hampered by low bandwidth in areas where they live. The use of captioning should be extended to all groups and constituencies who want it, and efforts should be made to improve its accuracy.