

Manal Ismail Chair, Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) ICANN

Subject: Your Letter of April 9 regarding ‘GAC Leadership concerns regarding changes to Subsequent Procedures for New gTLDs PDP WG Timeline’.

Dear Manal,

Firstly thank you and your GAC colleagues for writing to us and raising the concerns of the GAC Leadership regarding the timeline and progress ([PDP WG Workplan](#)) of our Subsequent Procedures for New gTLDs PDP WG. We have taken considerable time in discussing the letter with the Plenary of the WG as well as the Leadership Team and Staff and we have taken into account the relevant discussions on this matter within the GNSO Council, thus the slight delay in our reply. For that, we deeply appreciate your forbearance.

We also want to again recognise and appreciate the deep and effective engagement that the GAC undertook independently as well as with us and the activities of SubPro WG activities not only for the past several years but more specifically during ICANN67. We further appreciate the additional engagement with some of our plenary sessions and specific input into our progress of text drafting for our report that has occurred with several Members of the WG from the GAC. This input has been valuable, effective and timely, which reflects no doubt your ‘step-by-step approach’ undertaken since ICANN67.

We also note that your planning may have been developed from the assumption that the end date of our modified timeline reflected in the approved [GNSO Project Change Request](#) was a fixed milestone/goal. However, as we have repeatedly stated (even in the Project Change request, itself), that Work Plan was a ‘safety net’ “worst-case scenario” timeline that we prepared to ensure proper compliance with the newly deployed PDP 3.0 Implementation (see the GNSO Council’s [Final Report](#) for full details). In our presentation to the GNSO Council, we made it clear that the Working Group was working towards an end date that was sooner than what was in the Work Plan.

Nevertheless, we regret however that it was apparently not made clear enough that the [PDP WG Workplan](#) that was appended to the [GNSO Project Change Request](#) is a living document constantly being adjusted and updated by our WG Leadership Team to match our actual progress through our topic discussions and text drafting and to plan as well as adjust in terms of topic order and proposed dates for discussion, as we move forward to our Final Report. This occurs quite regularly and is always reviewed when updated in our plenary calls and complements the practice of announcing upcoming topics in Agenda sent out in advance and at the close of each plenary call. Any contraction of milestones on the timeline, such as the estimated date(s) for Final Report

publication for Public Comment, should be prepared for but should always be with good transparency and reasonable notice, as the progress is constantly tracked within the publically available PDP Work Plan. Regular review of this document is the best way of tracking our actual progress through topics and will help the GAC make any necessary adjustments in the timing of your 'step-by-step approach,' thereby optimally facilitating your valued input in the manner you have planned.

We also want to assure you that we are very aware of the additional burdens on so many of our ICANN Community, including so many in the GAC, from the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenging global health crisis. It has affected many of our volunteers, with some under most extreme and indeed unprecedented stress/strain from this deadly yet virulent disease. We will, of course, consider and entertain whatever we can do to facilitate ongoing and effective engagement in our work in these troubled times, but we are unable to hold off on the natural flow of progress in our work unless an overwhelming majority of our participants require us to do so. We can ***not*** however further extend our approved timeline beyond its current delineations. We will, of course, take into full consideration the work of the GAC at ICANN68, including the "preparation of potential GAC input regarding the Final Report (July and August as per GNSO Project Change Request Timeline)."

Thank you for your continued efforts to ensure that the valuable, important and meaningful input of the GAC can be introduced to our work in the most effective and timely manner. In addition to direct contributions to the deliberations, we welcome the GAC's input through Public Comment to the draft Final Report or as ensuing GAC Advice. Rest assured that as the PDP Co-Chairs we remain willing and available to assist this in any way we reasonably can that does not compromise our primary tasks, requirements and expectations as Chairs of the overall PDP Process for Subsequent Procedures for New gTLDs within the newly adopted PDP 3.0 specifications and expectations.

Kindest regards,

 Jeffrey J. Neuman
Jeffrey J. Neuman (May 4, 2020)

Cheryl Langdon-Orr and Jeff Neuman,
Subsequent Procedures for New gTLDs PDP WG Co-Chairs

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