

## ICANN Open Forum

The session provided an update on a number of issues and developments in ICANN, such as the IANA stewardship transition and ICANN accountability, ICANN operational excellence, ICANN globalization and engagement efforts, new top-level domains (new gTDLs), as well as Internet Governance. It was well moderated by Olga Madruga-Forti, ICANN Board Director.

ICANN Chairman of the Board, Steve Crocker, started by highlighting key events that took place since IGF Bali. He mentioned NTIA's announcement on IANA stewardship; Netmundial Sao Paulo meeting; the recent announcement by the world economic forum (WEF) on facilitating further dialogue on follow up on Netmundial. He shed some light on the IANA stewardship transition process, and stressed the importance of the accountability issue noting that it consumed most of ICANN's time right now. He talked a little bit about ICANN public responsibility program and noted that ICANN had recently created a new department to oversee various activities within ICANN that fall under this area. He concluded his remarks with a quick update about the new gTLDs program; he noted that more than 370 domains had been added to the root, and more in the pipeline. On the question of whether there is going to be a next round; he said "yes there will be one but we don't know when", and noted ICANN's commitment under the affirmation of commitments to make reviews on consumer choice, competition and trust.

ICANN President and CEO, Fadi Chehade, touched upon the three areas of work that the Board had asked him to focus on. The first area that consumes about 40% of his time is the IANA stewardship transition. He said that he runs a full program within ICANN to ensure that we meet our goal in completing the transition; the program is managed with success factors, key performance indicators, budgets, so that the community could have full visibility to everything related to the program. He further explained that in that program there were two tracks; the IANA transition, and ICANN accountability. He noted that ICANN could not be without the US government contract and without some activities to strengthen its accountability to the global interest. He confirmed that ICANN will ensure that the two tracks go in parallel and be interdependent where they need to be. He also reiterated the commitment he made at the Town Hall session on Day 1 that ICANN will extend the public comment period on the accountability process to another 21 days. He then moved to the second focus area, operational excellence, which also takes around 40% of his time. He said he would not go into details, but noted that ICANN was building a new framework for financial and organizational responsibility and promised to give more details at the ICANN meeting in Los Angeles in October. He finally touched upon the last focus area, Internet Governance, which takes the remaining 20% of his time. He said that over the past year ICANN had to take leadership role in some initiatives like Netmundial and other, but now it is time for ICANN to step back, participate with other players, but not lead. He then moved to the recent announcement by WEF and clarified the role WEF will have in this initiative. First,

WEF will play an incubating role for six months of four projects needed to advance the agenda that was set in Sao Paulo. Second, they will energize the substance of Internet Governance within their own community and promote the Netmundial principles across leaders from governments and business who are present at WEF meeting.

An interactive discussion with the audience took place. Most of the questions came from people who did not seem to be regular attendees of ICANN meetings. Questions addressed various issues including Netmundial and role of ICANN in implementing its recommendations and projects that came out of it; the multi-stakeholder model versus the self-regulatory model; how the multi-stakeholder community can lead the process post Netmundial; ICANN's sources of funds; who ICANN is accountable to and the difference between IANA transition and ICANN accountability process in terms of process, affected parties, etc.; role of WEF in the Netmundial initiative vis-à-vis other players; the three stages of identifying IG issues, identifying solutions, and finally implementing them.

Sally Costerton, Senior Advisor to the President of ICANN on Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) provided a high-level update on what has happened at ICANN since IGF Bali. She said that her focus since she joined ICANN had been on Internationalization, and on engaging more closely and effectively with communities around the world. She noted the stakeholder engagement teams and the various initiatives they lead in the regions such as ICANN next generation program that aims at bringing new young people to ICANN. She touched quickly on ICANN's new website; ICANN's presence on social media; improvements in language services; increase in support for community travellers; and deploying remote hubs for ICANN meetings.

Tarek Kamel, Senior Advisor to the President of ICANN on Government Engagement gave an overview on the government engagement strategy and efforts to reach out to the broader government representation, not only from ministries of communication and technology, but also from foreign affairs, economy, commerce, and other government departments, as well as UN missions and IGOs. He noted that all this was part of ICANN's globalization strategy, and stressed on the importance of inclusion and strengthening participation from developing countries. He also noted that ICANN had recently opened an office in Geneva to engage more closely with UN missions and IGOs.

A second round of Q&A addressed points related to financial arrangements between ICANN and WEF with regard to the Netmundial initiative; the likelihood of ICANN getting pressured by governments to comply with national laws particularly in countries that have challenges with freedom of expression, etc.; and lastly the role of governments within ICANN and how they could engage in the process equally, and along side other stakeholders, despite having an advisory role to the Board.