ICANN 57: Summary of High Interest Topic Cross-Community Session - Underserved Regions in ICANN

To follow is a summary of the High Interest Topic (HIT) session held at ICANN57, Hyderabad (Monday 7 November, 2016)

This summary has been prepared by the independent ACIG GAC Secretariat for the information of ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC).

It is **not** a formal record of the meeting.

Transcript of session: http://schd.ws/hosted_files/icann572016/43/I57%20HYD_Mon07Nov2016-HIT%20Underserved%20Regions-en.pdf

Panellists

GAC Representatives who are interested in finding out more about this topic may wish to approach the session panellists:

- Alice Munyua – HIT Session Chair. GAC representative for the African Union Commission; Co-chair of the GAC Under-served Regions Working Group.

- Olga Cavalli – GAC representative for Argentina; GAC Vice Chair.

- Pua Hunter – GAC representative for the Cook Islands; Co-chair of the GAC Under-served Regions Working Group.

- Siranush Vardanyan – ICANN staff member, Development and Public Responsibility Department; responsible for ICANN's Fellowship Program.

- Andrew Beck – AM Global. Outreach Chairman of the BC

- Tijani Ben Jemaa – Vice Chair of ALAC.

- Cheryl Langdon-Orr - Member of APRALO.

- Michele Neylon – Member of Registrar Stakeholder Group; GNSO Councillor; Board Member of the Internet Infrastructure Coalition.

- Rubens Kuhl - Citizen of Brazil (an underserved country); gTLD registry and ccTLD registry operator.

- Jonathan Zuck – APP Association; Chair of the Consumer Choice, Competition and Trust Review.

Summary of Discussions

Throughout the session, participants shared information and views. No formal position, or possible next steps (action items), were agreed or discussed.

The wide ranging discussions focussed on two key areas:

- **During the last gTLD round, why were there so few applications from underserved regions?** Participants noted that the majority of applications came from Europe, the

USA and China. Participants also discussed whether or not "underserved regions" was an appropriate or useful term.

Discussion about the barriers which prevented applications from underserved regions included:

- o Lack of awareness about the gTLD round (and about gTLDs generally) within underserved regions.

- o Lack of a clear business model. It was suggested that some applicants would rather 'wait and see' the outcomes from the first round, before committing themselves.

- o The high costs associated with applying, and the failure of ICANN working group processes to address that problem.

- o The complexity of the application process.

- o The business complexity of establishing a new gTLD within the DNS.

- o The lack of time available to applicants, who had to meet the funding round deadlines but also needed time to educate and persuade key decision-makers.

- o The irrelevance of new gTLDs to many within underserved regions.

- **What might be some of the solutions, to ensure there are more applications from underserved regions in the future?**

    Discussion included:

    - o Enhanced and improved outreach by ICANN and other stakeholders.

    - o Enhanced and improved capacity building, to increase knowledge and understanding of the DNS and also to increase participation in ICANN's multi-stakeholder model.

    - o Increasing diversity throughout ICANN and the ICANN community.

    - o Financial support targeting applicants from underserved regions, potentially coming at least in part through the proceeds of gTLD auctions.

    - o Removing deadlines by introducing an ongoing application process, or by implementing (and advertising) a number of future rounds.

    - o Introduction of enhanced and improved application procedures.

    - o Changes to the existing structural model of registries and registrars.

    - o Using the recommendations of the CCT Review to push for change.

    - o Using existing ICANN outreach programs (Fellowship, Next Generation, and Newcomers programs).

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