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ICANN79 | CF – GAC: Brief on Universal Acceptance Strategies  
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**GULTEN TEPE:** Please speak clearly and at a reasonable pace to allow for accurate interpretation. And please make sure to mute all other devices when you're speaking. You may access all available features for this session in the Zoom toolbar. With that, I will hand the floor over to GAC chair, Nicolas Caballero.

**NICOLAS CABALLERO:** Thank you, Gulden. Good morning, everyone, good afternoon, or good evening, depending on which part of the world you're located. So it is my pleasure to give you the welcome, not only to you, but to my distinguished panelists. I have the pleasure of being in touch with some of them for more than 10, 12 years in some cases. This session will be running for 75 minutes. And we'll be getting into the nuances of UA and all the details that are going to be presented by my distinguished colleagues here. Egypt, would you like to say anything? One-hour session. Thank you for the correction. And that's the good thing about having very intelligent vice chairs. Thank you so much for that, Egypt.

So without further ado, let me welcome again, I'll give the floor to Sarmad and Elizabeth. They'll be talking about universal acceptance for about 15 minutes. Hopefully we'll have enough time to allocate enough time for questions and answers. So without further ado, Sarmad, the floor is yours.

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SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Thank you, Nico, and good morning, everyone here, and good morning, good afternoon, and good evening to everybody online. My name is Sarmad Hussain, and I'm here with Elizabeth from ICANN Org, just to provide a brief context of universal acceptance before we get into more detailed discussion by our colleagues here on the panel. So next slide, please. Next slide. And next slide. Thank you.

So just to set the context of universal acceptance, digital inclusion has been a longstanding commitment by all of us. This was among the principles which were set up in the World Summit of Information Society in Geneva Summit in 2003. There was a call to build a people-centric, inclusive, and development-oriented information society where everyone can access, utilize, and share information and knowledge. To be inclusive, of course, one of the barriers we have is the language itself, which we communicate in. Next slide, please.

And if you look at the world around us, we have millions and in some cases billions of people who are speaking different languages across the globe. So to develop a truly inclusive Internet, for example, we need to make sure that the Internet is actually available to these people in their languages. Next slide, please.

So a linguistically diverse Internet basically significantly contributes to developing a knowledge-based society. And that has actually been the reason why, based on linguistic diversity online, which was a key principle from Geneva Declaration in 2003, it led to a commitment towards multilingualization of the Internet as part of the WSIS 20 Tunis agenda in 2005. And it clearly included a statement which asked to

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advance the introduction of multilingualism in domain names and email addresses by implementing programs and strengthening cooperation for their global deployments. Next slide, please.

In addition to that, UNESCO has also been leading the efforts on developing multilingualism in cyberspace since their 2003 recommendations. And they have actually been working towards alleviating language barriers to access the Internet and addressing, basically enabling technology in all the different local languages. Next slide, please.

So ICANN, of course, has been working with the community under the leadership of the community to make this possible as well. IDNs were first introduced in 2003 based on the standards which were developed by Internet Engineering Task Force. And since then, ICANN has been supporting the IDN ccTLD fast-track process, which has allowed for countries and territories to apply for IDN country code top-level domains. And so far, we have successfully evaluated and announced 62 strings from 43 different territories and countries, of which 61 are already actually delegated. And these are shown here. These, of course, top-level domains allow users to have access to complete domain names in local languages. Next slide, please.

In addition to this program for ccTLDs, which was announced in 2009, in the 2012 round for the new gTLDs, it was also possible to apply for IDN top-level domains, generic top-level domains. And there were multiple applications, of which 90 IDN gTLDs are now currently delegated and available for use by the users globally. Next slide, please.

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So with that, it is now possible to have all these different kinds of domain names in all the different languages and scripts around the world. So these are examples of actual domain names which work. You can actually click on them, and they will actually resolve in your browser. Next slide, please.

And it is also now possible to have email addresses using these domain names in local languages as well, based on the standards which have been developed by the Internet Engineering Task Force. And these email addresses actually are also functional. So you can actually send an email to any of these email addresses. And we've set up an autoresponder that it will actually respond back to you, and you'll get an email response back in your mailbox. So this technology is obviously possible. It enables more and more people around the world, especially those who are going to come online.

There's still about 2.5 billion people who are going to connect to Internet over the coming years and are still offline. And most of those people are going to come online from Asia and Africa and will be using a local language, in addition to, of course, the 6 billion or so people who are – 5.5 billion people who are already online and actually can access Internet. But they also – some of them can use English, but many of them actually use their own local languages as well.

So with this technology available, now the challenge is that some of the software which is out there, for example, email servers or your social media applications, they're not updated to support this technology. So when they come across an email address in Chinese or Greek, they may actually think that it is an invalid email address, even though it is

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actually a valid email address, because it's just older technology. It doesn't – it's not geared up to – and that's a universal acceptance problem. That universal acceptance means that all domain names and email addresses should be supported in all software applications. And, of course, there's a significant role governments actually should and could play in making this happen. With that, I'll hand it over to my colleague, Elizabeth, to take you through the remaining presentation. Thank you.

ELIZABETH OLUOCH:

Thanks so much, Sarmad. Next slide, please. I am Elizabeth Oluoch, and I am with the government and IGO engagement team. And I'm going to be discussing a couple of tools, such as the recommendations and resolutions at the United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization, UNESCO, and the International Telecommunication Union, ITU, that promote multilingualism on the Internet. What is the purpose of these tools, and what are the cause to actions, particularly for member states, and non-governmental organizations such as ICANN, on multilingualism on the Internet?

Before I go into that, I just want to go back to the context that Sarmad mentioned earlier, because the UN continues to play a pivotal role in the development agenda. For example, in 2000, member states committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In 2015, I beg your pardon, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. The UN also has an interest in the role of digital technologies in supporting socioeconomic development. And the UN played a lead role in the WSIS

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Tunis Agenda, which set out an aspirational and action-oriented framework to develop an inclusive and development-oriented information society.

The WSIS Tunis Agenda has several commitments and urges different stakeholders, including governments, to not only address the digital divide, but to also consider multilingualism in those efforts. In 2015, during the WSIS review, at the high-level meeting at the UN General Assembly, one of the outcome documents was the WSIS+10 Outcome Document, which noted the continued need for supporting multilingualism on the Internet.

The WSIS Tunis Agenda also calls on several UN agencies to support the implementation of the WSIS action lines. UNESCO plays a key role in WSIS action lines C8 and C11, focusing on cultural diversity, identity, linguistic diversity, local content, and international cooperation. UNESCO has been raising awareness and supporting multilingualism on the Internet for many years to promote cultural and linguistic diversity online. UNESCO and ICANN collaborate to raise awareness of IDNs.

UNESCO's Member States approved a normative instrument in 2003, a recommendation concerning the promotion and use of multilingualism and universal access to cyberspace. This really allows Member States to reinforce the recommendation in national laws, particularly in policies on languages and in other digital strategies. Next slide, please.

The ITU is a UN specialized agency that facilitates international connectivity across telecommunication ICT networks. It has 193 Member States in its membership and sector members and associate

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members consisting of companies and regional and international organizations such as ICANN, universities, and academia. ITU resolutions provide instructions on the work of the ITU and its work program. Some of the resolutions also contain language that encourages Member States and sector members to contribute to or advance some areas of the work program.

At the ITU Plenty Potential Conference in 2022 in Bucharest, the conference adopted the final acts which reflected the decisions and resolutions that were suppressed, adopted, or revised by the conference. These were consensus resolutions. Plenty Potential Resolution 133 was revised in 2022. This resolution on the role of administrations of Member States in the management of internationalized multilingual domain names emphasizes the importance of IDNs in promoting digital inclusion and acknowledges the roles of different stakeholders such as governments and technical communities in promoting multilingualism. The resolution emphasizes that IDNs contribute to sustainable development through the promotion of greater Internet accessibility and use of local languages. I won't go through all of that because it's on the slide.

I think importantly, the resolution raises awareness of universal acceptance and calls on Member States and sector members to consider how to further promote the adoption of universal acceptance in respect of IDNs and to collaborate and coordinate with relevant organizations and stakeholders in enabling the use of IDNs in the Internet. As governments and also as non-governmental stakeholders, these are calls to action to really promote and raise awareness of IDNs as well as universal acceptance. So for governments that manage the

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digital strategies or are developing language policies or digital strategies and are focusing on digital skills, Resolution 133, for example, was revised to incorporate digital skills in there. A key component to that is IDNs and linguistic diversity, which really encourages more of those communities to be able to come online, especially if you're developing digital skills. So these are useful tools and resources for governments to really take to the national level and to really adapt in some of their strategies. And I'll hand it back to you, Sarmad.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Thank you. Can we move one slide up as well? So this was the last slide which Elizabeth was referring to. So with that, I think we're happy to take a question or so, otherwise we can move to the next section.

NICOLAS CABALLERO:

Thank you, Sarmad, Elizabeth. So I would give the floor to Anil now and leave the Q&A for the end in order to make sure that they will have enough time to present, if you don't mind. So please go ahead, Anil.

ANIL JAIN:

Thank you, Chair. Anil, for the record. So after Sarmad and Elizabeth, let us see how the UASG as a group is trying to meet the challenges which IDN and EAI has. So we are going to touch upon the challenges and achievement till date. UASG is working for a five-year strategic plan to have quantitative achievements in the next five years. And this is not only five-year paperwork, but this is year after year, and it is connected with the action plan. Then most important in this gathering, ladies and gentlemen, is the government role in UA and how government can



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influence implementation of universal acceptance. And finally, we have started a very important work called UA Day Celebration since last year, and it has given us a big uptick in spreading the UA awareness across the globe. Next slide, please.

So challenges which we have are lack of universal acceptance. If we have seen that only 3% of the total top-level domains which are delegated, 3% are IDN, which include both ccTLDs and gTLDs. Similarly, the emails which are being used are also very less. We have touched around 23%, which include both level one and level two, but still miles have to be achieved.

The second challenge is reduced accessibility and innovation. Now here we are trying to address that why organizations should adopt universal acceptance. What is the benefit which they are going to have? And this is going to touch upon the economic impact on the businesses and technical partners in achieving the universal acceptance. Next slide, please.

Though as I said that challenges, IDN TLDs allows the multilingual domain names and emails. That is the basic objective, but there are issues. For example, if you are subscribing a newsletter and putting an email address here in local languages, or which are IDN domains which are longer than three characters, then the outcome can be, as we can see at the footnote, please enter a valid email address. Now this is what is trying to resolve, all of us together. Next slide, please.

The achievements till date, we can say the initial steps which we have taken, is we have taken up in a grand way about awareness of universal acceptance as a problem, and also the possibility of having the

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universal acceptance as a technology which is available to the people. Second, for the last eight years, UASG is working on technical improvement and providing various technical solutions to the registries, to the email servers, email providers. And of course, as Elizabeth has said, that we are undertaking the policy advocacy, which is happening at ICANN level, at IETF level, at IGF level, and at ITU level on a constant basis. So today we are very happy that in GAC we are discussing this, and we also are very happy that ccNSO has also taken up a particular focused working group on this subject. Next slide, please.

So five-year strategy plan, which I was discussing, starting from financial year 25 to 29, the major targets are, we are focusing on few focus areas which influence and motivate the universal acceptance adoption. One is government. We feel that government is very important organization, a focus group which can help us. Number two, big techs like Google, Apple, Facebook, they touch maximum number of people in the community. Then third is the DNS industry, which include the registries, registrars, and the registrant. In the quantitative terms, we have targeted 50% of support of EAI and 99% ASCII emails using short and long ASCII by end of five-year strategy plan. Similarly, in the email servers, 50% email should support level two, which include not only receiving and sending the email, but creation of emails in local language, and 90% support for level one, which include only receiving and sending the emails. Next slide, please.

So this is what I discussed about the adoption of IDNs and EAI. We can see that few countries and few languages adoption is quite low. And as I said, on the right-hand side, if you see the EAI support, we have

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touched just 23.5% as per the latest survey on adoption of UA. So what I'm saying is that all of us has miles to go before we can really meet the objectives of universal acceptance. Next slide, please.

This I would like to pass on because of the paucity of time, but everything is written that we have four working groups, measurement working group, technology working group, EAI working group, and communication working group. Every working group has taken out their specific five-year strategy plan, which we are going to implement. Next slide, please.

And the role of government, as I said, is very important. So it is the suggestion which UASG would like to say that government is procuring large amount of equipment. If we motivate those vendors who are supplying to government, their system should be UA ready. This will give a big impact on the overall UA adoption. Then reach out to the because government departments are huge in number. If they themselves adopt the UA on website and on domain acceptance, that will be wonderful. And the third is that most of the ccTLDs are government ccTLDs. So if there is a coordination, better coordination between the ccTLD managers and the GAC delegates to participate, to strengthen the UA related action, I think we can achieve a big milestone in taking it to the next step. Next slide, please.

So these are the few reports which are available, which we have just listed out for your consumption. Next slide, please.

And now I hand over to my colleague, Dr. Nabil, to take you through the UA day, which is a very impactful work which we have started since last year. Over to you, Dr. Nabil.

NABIL BENAMAR:

Thank you, Anil. This is Nabil Benamar for the records, UASG vice chair. So I would like here just to mention the importance of the UA day activities. So UA day is an opportunity to rally the local, regional, and global communities and organizations to spread the word, to spread the universal acceptance spirit. So through activities related to awareness and to encourage UA adoption with key stakeholders. The UASG has defined the different types of training and events. So we have awareness for the first-time events, and then we have training, and then we have, this year we have added academic curriculum, and then adoption or strategy. So we have different types of events depending on the readiness of the community towards adopting the universal acceptance principles.

So in 2023, we had received 89 proposals, over 50 events were shortlisted, and from four countries. Most events were held in March, between March and April 23. As you can see from the statistics here, we have most events, most shortlisted events have been held in Africa and Asia Pacific, and few, really few in Europe, we have only two. And the third place is for Latin America and Caribbean. Different participants from different countries, different languages, 22 languages including Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, and so on. Next slide please.

So in 2024, so this year, we have shortlisted more than last year, so now we have 56 shortlisted events. We have given the priority to adoption, training, and curricular events. As I said earlier, we have the first event that should be done is about awareness. Majority of participants in new events are not aware of the possibility to create domain names in any

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script, and email addresses in any script too. So this awareness is very important, but the next step should be training. To train the people, the participants on how we can implement universal acceptance principles by giving details, by giving some hands-on labs, and to demonstrate that this is something that can be feasible and doable, and it's easily implemented.

Then we need to go to the adoption. Adoption, we need to see if there are some successful stories, success stories, use cases, implementation, and this is what we mean by adoption. So this year we have shortlisted 56 events, 23 of them are still awareness, but now the new thing is that we have 15 shortlisted for adoption, and this is a good milestone that we have achieved, because adoption should come after doing, last year for example, awareness and training. So when we have 15 out of 56 only for adoption, this is a big milestone.

12 for technical training, and also we have four for UA academic curricula. In our measurement working group, we have developed a curricula for universities. We have now the content of the courses that should be given to the students in different universities for computer science background, where we are including the key information about internationalization, IDNs, email address internationalization, but this can be implemented or is implemented in different courses. So we have more than 10 micro modules that we have defined, and the link is available on the ICANN website so that anyone can take the content. The content is available there, the description, the syllabus of the courses, and also the slides that can be used for students from faculty in different universities. So the event will be held between 1st of March

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until the 13th of May '24, and it's more about local activities, and we have two regional events. Next slide, please.

The foundation, registry of the national Internet domain of Serbia, has been chosen to organize the Keystone UA day, which is the global UA day events that is held in one country each year. So last year it was in India, this year it's in Serbia, in Belgrade, and it will be on the 28th of March this year, which is the date that we have respected and we have respected for the consecutive second year to celebrate the global UA day. So it will be organized under the auspice of the ICANN and partnership with RNIDS and the Volunteer Universal Acceptance Working Group. Next slide please.

So who can help achieve UA? So we are all working under the framework of the multi-stakeholder model. So government policy makers generating demand for UA ready products and services by updating accessibility standards and procurement process. We have in academia the offering IT rated degree programs, as we have mentioned earlier. Technology enables producing the relevant standards and best-count practices and provides of software, programming languages, tools, and frameworks. By the way, the training material that we are offering in our events is not only about domain names and email addresses, but also about programming languages and their ability to handle different scripts and different languages.

We have also the technology developers, which are organizations and individuals developing and deploying online applications and services using the programming languages, tools, and frameworks. For email software and service providers, we have organizations and individuals

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providing different applications, tools, utilities for the email ecosystem. And here we need to go to see both sides of the email, so the client and the provider. Can we create email address using different scripts? So this is what we are here defined as level one or level two or gold level or silver level. The email service providers, organizations and individuals providing services for the email ecosystem. And then we have the administrators of email that are deploying and administering email rated software and services. Next slide, please.

So here we are seeking the support from GAC. So ccNSO was actively involved in supporting UASG for shortlisting the proposals that we have received. The ALAC and ATLAS community are working with the UASG, RALOs, ALS, and individual members around the world to promote the end user benefit for UA and encourage the adoption of UA at the local and regional levels. So here we are asking if GAC UA and IDN Working Group help make a connection with the GAC audience on participating to the UA event. So for this, you just need to join the UA event near you. Next slide, please.

As announced in our website, the UASG.tech website, you can see the UA day page where we are that is celebrated each year at the same date, 28th of March. So just please join the UA day event near you. It can be a local or regional event. Participate, see the list of UA day events in this URL that you have, [universalacceptance.day](https://universalacceptance.day). Next slide, please.

Then please follow and share, like, engage with the UASG on social media. We have links for LinkedIn, for Facebook, for other social media. Join the UA discuss email list so that you can post your comment, your recommendation, your critics. Report a problem if you find an

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application or web page that is not UA ready. This is something that can be done by the community and can really help to assess all available applications, web pages, servers, any application that is not UA ready. So please feel free to report so that we can take care of this. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you so much for that, Nabil Benamar. And thank you, Anil, and of course, Sarmad and Elizabeth. Before I give the floor to Abdalmonem and Regina, let me open the floor, given the fact that we're doing surprisingly well in terms of timing. You know, let me give, we have some questions from the floor. I have the USA. Please go ahead.

SUSAN CHALMERS: Thank you, Chair, and good morning. I was wondering if you might go back a few slides or if our GAC support colleagues could go back to the slide with recommendations for governments. Thank you. So government officials generating demand for UA ready products and services by updating accessibility standards and procurement processes. I was just curious if you have come across any examples of procurement processes?

ANIL JAIN: [inaudible] undertaking this work, but unfortunately we don't have the data available with us. We'll try to collect the data and we'll pass on to GAC for the information to the GAC members shortly. Thank you.



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**NABIL BENAMAR:** Let me add just one comment here. So for example, for IDNs, the international domain names. So if you go to Wikipedia, you can see some statistics here, even though a bit old for 2018. But we have still, as of 2018, about 20 countries using non-Latin scripts do not have an international country called top level domain, including, for example, here they are giving the example of Japan. So we want to see these cases. So if the country that is not using the Latin script for its own language is still behind or still not deploying an IDN ccTLD, that's a concern for us. So we need to approach those countries, those people to see what is the reason for this. And then next steps. Thank you.

**NICOLAS CABALLERO:** Thank you very much, Nabil. Thank you, Anil. Oh, we have a queue already. I have Switzerland, Iran, the United Kingdom and India. And now I'm starting to get worried about timing. But please, please go ahead. Switzerland.

**JORGE CANCIO:** Thank you so much. Jorge Cancio, Swiss government for the record. First of all, let me thank you so much for the work you are doing. It's really impressive what you are establishing, what you are developing. I want to make perhaps two comments. First is also seeing it from a country which is multilingual, but which is operating basically on the Latin script. It would be very helpful, beyond the presentation, which is very useful, to have kind of a pitch, kind of good reasons why we should invest into this. So I guess you have that. But I think it could be very useful for everyone operating in Latin script to have that handy and to start discussions or engage in discussions with our internal people who,

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for instance, look into public procurement, et cetera. So that's the first thing.

Another point which is more general. I heard with a lot of interest how you were referring to the WSIS framework, the WSIS framework and the work being done by UNESCO, ITU, together with ICANN and the community, because we are, as you might be aware, and I'm also talking here for colleagues from the GAC, in a very crucial year for the follow-up, for the development or the updating of WSIS. So it's really crucial that we engage, because WSIS is not only something at a very high political level. It's really something that is having practical implementation, practical results for the people. So I think it's very worthy to make this connection and to remember and recall that we now have to engage in this process and the review for the 20 years of WSIS because it has very tangible implications for all of us. So I'll leave it by that and looking forward to your reaction.

NABIL BENAMAR:

Thank you. Thank you very much for your excellent question, especially that it comes from Switzerland. Switzerland here is a nice example because it's multilingual. And I assume that you are using German and French. And correct me if there is another language in your country.

JORGE CANCIO:

Italian and Romansh.

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NABIL BENAMAR:

Okay, so let me just go to the French, for example. So French is ASCII-based, yes, it's Latin script, but you have accents. Accents are not accepted or were not accepted by the standards of DNS and email. So if you want that the population of Switzerland using French as their language for communication, for being present in the internet, for their identity, we need to enable accent. This is part of what we are doing here in the UASG. So it's not only about non-Latin script, but also for Latin script that you use in these special characters, especially accents. Accents are a real issue in Switzerland.

I would like here to encourage you to connect with, for example, we have been approached by a community from Quebec because they want to use French with accent in all their applications. For example, if you have a form to fill and you enter your domain name with accent or your email address that you have been able to create using accent, the form will not accept this. It will say a wrong address. This is frustrating for citizens from this part of the world. So here it's about identity and we are encouraging all concerned citizens to look for this. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO:

Thank you very much, Nabil. I'm starting to get really worried about timing. So please try to be short and straight to the point regarding questions and answers. I would love to be here for three hours and this is fascinating. I would love to have three hours to talk about this, but I have a queue. Thank you, Switzerland. I have Iran and then the United Kingdom and then India and then Papua New Guinea. Iran, go ahead, please.

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**KAVOUSS ARASTEH:** Thank you very much. Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. Thanks to the presenters. It was very, I would say, instructive presentation. Could you kindly mention that what is the conceptual relation between universal access and IDN? In resolution 133 of ITU, never we refer to universal acceptance as such. But always concentrate on internationalized domain name. And this is one. And second question that if a country does not accept or does not take approaches of universal access, what will happen? Thank you.

**ELIZABETH OLUOCH:** Thank you so much, Iran, for your question. I'm just reading the prompt because it didn't come out very clearly. But I think the question that you're asking is the relationship between IDNs and universal acceptance in respect to the ITU resolution. And the ITU resolution 133, the emphasis really is on raising awareness of IDNs for the member states as well as sector members in the ITU. Raising awareness of the great benefits that come from IDNs, particularly in the context of digital inclusion and meaningful access and connectivity. But also raising awareness that both member states and sector members have a role to play in the implementation of IDNs. And we are just drawing attention to the fact that this resolution exists and what its intention is for member states to be able to take this and to be able to promote awareness of it. And then at the next level, which includes universal acceptance, is what UASG is also encouraging here. I hope that clarifies your question.

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NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you very much, Iran. Thank you, Elisabeth. I have the UK, India, Australia, and then Papua New Guinea. Please bear in mind we still have the last part of the presentation from Abdalmonem and Regina. UK, please go ahead.

NIGEL HICKSON: Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Nigel Hickson. I'll be very brief indeed. First of all, thank you very much to the panel for presenting on this really important issue. I was just going to mention some work at the ITU as well. As colleagues might know, one of the council working groups at the ITU, the council working group on international policy issues, has various public consultations. And this year, a couple of months ago, the UK put forward a proposal to have a public consultation on universal acceptance. Primarily because of the concerns on the adoption rate in some business systems, as has eloquently been pointed out to us this morning. So we hope this consultation will enable a wide range of stakeholders to opine on what still needs to be done to ensure that all systems are UA ready. Thank you.

ANIL JAIN: Thank you for the question. As is clear that all relevant organizations and agencies are working together to ensure that internet is available to each citizen of this world, globe. As far as ICANN is concerned, we are working with ICANN board and IDN working group of the board on two, three aspects. One is to spread the awareness about importance of UA and tools available to the technological partners for the UA. Second, we are involving the government, technology providers, civil societies, and

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other relevant groups to ensure that with the help of their own community, they should be able to bring this universal acceptance to those people who are really concerned about this.

As during my presentation, I have shown the level of UA adoption as on date. So there are still huge amount of work which is required for UA adoption. And we feel in UASG that next one billion internet users are expected to come from those users which are not really connected with internet or they are under connected with internet. So the efforts of all communities together are on. And that is what UASG is working on the five-year strategic plan to achieve. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you, Anil. I have India and then Australia. India, please go ahead.

T. SANTOSH: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, UASG group, for making a good presentation. So I will go straight to this slide. So basically there are two things for the government policy makers. I would like to know from UASG whether there is a standard operating procedure available so that all the governments who are there in the room can use it for making kind of a mandating for the products and services to be used in the procurement process because in India we don't have. Now coming to academia, do the Universal Existence Steering Group have a course curriculum so that this course could be imparted in different states? And the last question, what is the status of ICANN being UA ready, whether a user who knows only a specific language can able to register in his or her language? Thank you.

ANIL JAIN:

So we'll answer three questions from three different panelists. I'll answer your first question, Santosh. And second question, I'll request Nabil to answer. And third question, of course, Sarmad who will be able to answer. The first question is about the standard operating procedure. Now, as you know that ICANN per se or UASG are advisory in nature. So we don't prescribe a particular procedure to be followed, but we definitely are advising governments to adopt universal acceptance through multiple channels, and few of them are recommended here. And as per my knowledge, the governments themselves in those countries are defining the standard operating procedure. So in case it is recommended by GAC that UASG should define certain draft standard operating procedures for the government, we have noted down this and we will try to attempt on it and provide to the GAC, which GAC leadership can advise to their members. Thank you. Over to Nabil for curriculum.

NABIL BENAMAR:

Thank you. As for your second question about curriculum, I have just mentioned in my intervention that we have developed the curriculum. If you go to the ICANN community website and you can go to just curriculum, you will see the entire curriculum, which is 12 micro models with the content, with the syllabus, with everything that is needed. So for the moment is a draft. We are looking for it's like a request for comments. It's not the IETF principle, but it's like we are expecting to receive feedback from the community. Just send us an email on [uaprogram@icann.org](mailto:uaprogram@icann.org). Thank you.

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**SARMAD HUSSAIN:** Thank you. And I've shared the link of the draft curriculum in the chat as well for those who would like to access it. On the last question on where is ICANN in this process, very recently if you saw, we announced in a blog that ICANN email systems are now UA ready to the extent that we can now receive and send emails back in all the different languages and scripts. So that's one of the, I guess, things which are holding us back. That is now done. We actually provide very detailed updates to the community on the status of ICANN systems as part of the UA community update at two meetings in a year, at least. And we did provide an update with more details if you would like to take a look during the prep week for ICANN 79. There's a presentation with many more details on what is happening in different systems where we are. So I'd encourage you to take a look. And the recording and presentations are available through the ICANN 79 website. Thank you.

**NICOLAS CABALLERO:** Thank you so much, Sarmad. I have Australia and then I'm going to have to ask you to go five minutes over time. We're absolutely out of time. Please be quick, Australia. I'm sorry about this, but go ahead.

**IAN SHELDON:** Thank you, Chair. Ian Sheldon, GAC Australia. Just building on the last question about the journey towards true universal acceptance, the next round of new gTLDs represents an important milestone in that journey. I learned yesterday that in some cases it can take up to six years for an IDN at the top-level domain to be registered in the root zone. Is there



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anything we can do to expedite that process? Six years feels like a long time to wait before you can start using top level domain in a different language.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Is it possible for me to follow up offline with you after this and get that information and then come back to you with details? But I'm not really sure exactly what particular area you're talking about, but I'll follow up offline. Thank you.

IAN SHELDON: Yes, very keen to take offline. That's something we heard in the SubPro IRT meeting yesterday. So, yeah, very keen to follow that up. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you, Australia. Thank you for being short. Abdalmonem, you will have five minutes, literally speaking, to give your presentation. I'm very sorry about that. Go ahead, please.

ABDALMONEM GALILA: Thank you very much. Actually, I am Abdalmonem Galila. I will wear the hat of ccNSO rather than GAC at these slides for today. Actually, as said by my colleague that universal acceptance is going to further for universal acceptance adoption is collaborative work between different stakeholders. As a recognition for the importance to assist and help for more adoption of universal acceptance, there is a committee established within ccNSO called Universal Acceptance Committee. It was created since 2023 that has a goal to create a platform for ccTLD

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manager in order to interact and share information related to the acceptance of domain names, whatever these domain names is ASCII or IDNs or whatever these domain names at the top level or second level. Of course, to share this information at the global level within the ICANN community. And of course, we are not going for UAC to formulate any standard or any policies that are away from the scope of ccNSO. And of course, we will not overlap with any work for other communities within the workgroup. Next slide, please.

Of course, we as Universal Acceptance Committee will have a scope of work. Our scope is not limited to liaison with UASG or information sharing or having any additional activities that may be subjected to community consultation or approval from council. Actually, we as UAC will have liaison with UASG that share information from there to ccNSO to be updated all the time about what is going on for universal acceptance. And for information sharing, we have, for example, we could go to have some awareness session for ccTLDs during the ICANN meeting or during the tech day. And for also another example, to conduct surveys to measure the U.A. readiness for ccTLDs or communicate with other workgroups related to universal acceptance like GAC IDN UA workgroup, IDN board workgroup, something like that.

Actually, why you are going to have ccNSO UAC? We need to fill in the gaps that lead to information sharing, complementary to the existing effort at the local and regional and global level without overlapping with any other communities what they are tasked for. And the membership for universal acceptance committee is open for all ccTLD manager who are subscribed for ccNSO to be member at UAC, and also for anyone who is in the ccTLD wanted to subscribe for UAC without

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being a member of ccNSO, it's open for them as well. At the moment, I will leave the floor to my colleague Regina in order to have the turn to give you more about the activities and the future plan of UAC. Regina, the floor is yours.

REGINA FUCHSOVA:

Thank you very much. Hello, my name is Regina and I work at EURID, the registry of .eu, [inaudible] ccTLDs. I will continue our fly by through the universal acceptance committee at ccNSO. Next slide, please.

So let me continue on the recent activities. What we have been working on for the last few weeks was establishing a library where it's a moderated library where members or a subgroup of the committee approves the links and resources being published there. It should be a single point library for all relevant information, especially for ccNSO members, but also beyond. And they are not limited only to IDNs, but also EAI. So the whole field of universal acceptance. You can find in the slide a link to the library. Also, if you are aware of a good source of information report within your countries, please send it to us. They are the instructions to be followed at this link. Next slide, please.

As for the future plans for further activities, especially now at the ICANN meeting, my colleagues are doing an outreach awareness activity to get more members, which is crucial, especially from the ccTLDs for the working group. We want to have the group very concrete, oriented on concrete tangible results, and with the help of the potential new members, we will finalize our working plan. Also, we are here to assist on organizing several sessions or events during ICANN meetings and also to liaise. As Abdalmonem already mentioned, liaising is one of our

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key roles with relevant groups. We want to make sure that there are no overlaps, but rather synergies found in the activities around universal acceptance. We have also created a dedicated mailing list, which you are cordially invited to join, either to get information on what is happening or to also contribute. Next slide, please. So please feel free to reach to any of us, and there will be one more update to the ccTLD community on Wednesday afternoon. Thank you very much.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you, Regina. Abdalmonem, any final words?

ABDALMONEM GALILA: Just I would like to add that yesterday during our meeting with UASG, the meeting was between ccNSO and UASG and the community members, we committed our priorities that we set during the Napkin Pitch exercise. During the Napkin Pitch exercise, we have a set of ideas, and then we identified the impact and effort analysis, and then set priorities. Yesterday we succeeded for that, and we already finalized the invitation letters that will be sent to ccTLD managers within ccNSO, inviting them to the Universal Acceptance Committee. And we are here for today that we need to have something to cooperate with members related to universal acceptance. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Thank you so much. And my apologies for going seven minutes overtime. Thank you, Anil, Abdalmonem, Regina, Elizabeth, Nabil, and Sarmad. Thank you so much. Fascinating indeed. We'll reconvene here

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for my fellow GAC members. We'll come back here at 10:30. Enjoy your break. Thank you.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]**