

LOS ANGELES – RALO Leadership & ALT Working Breakfast
Wednesday, October 15, 2014 – 07:00 to 08:15
ICANN – Los Angeles, USA

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Good morning, everybody. This is the RALO Leadership & At-Large Leadership Tam Working Breakfast. Welcome! I hope you've had a little bit of sleep. It's been a long day yesterday. We've got another long day today. Basically this breakfast is about reflecting on some of the discussions that the RALO chairs had yesterday with Fadi Chehadé and his executive team.

With us we have David Olive who was present yesterday at the meeting at the end of the day, and he will be able to give us some feedback perhaps, some reflections and a summary maybe of the points we touched on yesterday. Then we'll have a good discussion on this. So, David, you have the floor.

DAVID OLIVE: Thank you, Olivier, and thank you everyone for allowing me to do this. This was planned before we knew about the community roundtables that Fadi is conducting here at ICANN 51. The reason for that request is knowing you were so busy with the ATLAS II in London, I was running back and forth between your meetings and other meetings that I wasn't able to really spend some time. So it was very kind of you to allow me to do that.

One, I just would like to talk and say that I have two jobs, so to say, at ICANN. One is the policy development staff. I'm the vice president of policy development. So the team you see to my right is the team that's

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supporting the At-Large and the ALAC and we're very happy that they're here to do that.

So, of course, from Heidi and Silvia, Ariel and [Susie], I get full reports. Gisella as well. Full reports on the activities of your group. So that's how I can keep aware of and know of your activities.

But as a policy development focus, I also know of your activities of the policy statements – the inputs that you provide to our various processes, primarily of course within the GNSO process, but also outside of that. And those are very much looked after, sought after, appreciated in the policy development process, because of the commentary and inputs you provide. So I wanted to also tell you about that.

The second job I have, as you also have many jobs, the second job I have is heading the regional hub in Istanbul. That's the hub for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. I was employee number one and now we're employee almost ten in our offices there.

And I wanted just to say two things are important about that among other things to be closer to our stakeholders in the region. There are eight accredited registrars in Turkey. There are 151 registrars in the region, for example, and so they don't have to wait for the sun to rise in Los Angeles to get a response and some answers to their questions. They can do it within their reasonably known time zone in that area. Istanbul is well-placed for that.

But the second element is I've encouraged my global leaders and others from ICANN to come and visit. We had, of course, the Internet Governance Forum in Istanbul as well as a Board workshop.

The other good point about that is that people realize that the sun doesn't always rise only in Los Angeles in southern Los Angeles. There are things called time zones. And I tell my colleagues that it's really nice that in the afternoon of Los Angeles and you say it's about 3:00 in the afternoon – let's have a meeting that it's a little late for other people elsewhere in the globe. So I remind them about being careful of that, because the night shift sometimes goes into the early morning breakfast shifts and I am trying to work quietly within ICANN to point out that time zones are different and the sun does rise and set in Los Angeles. We're here today. We're happy about that. But it does it at a different rate elsewhere. I wanted to just let you know about that.

More importantly, the recent activities in the policy development area as well as advisories, we've been having ongoing discussions with the supporting organizations – the leaders, chairs, if you will of the supporting organizations and advisory committees.

We've had a regular consultation usually before each ICANN meeting, and this was expanded to include also monthly calls with those chairs between Fadi and the global leaders at ICANN and the chairs for the purpose of information exchange. You've probably heard reports of that, and transcriptions are posted on the website – the purpose of which is to hear topics, hear what's going on in the various SOs and ACs and to be prepared for the work and the activities.

In particular, their focus has been and is looking at the workload – how to manage that, how to prioritize that, knowing that the regular work, if you will, of ICANN policy development and areas of advisories are time-consuming and important, of course. But then we have issues that are

beyond our control so to say, the IANA transition or the accountability process or the strategic plan or all these other important elements of our work at ICANN – how best to handle that and manage that so that we can get those quality inputs and the timely statements from people like yourself and your groups in the regions and the ALSes.

This Friday on the 10th of October, the various chairs came together to talk about this and the result was a further study to have three groups look at priority, what kind of mechanisms could be helpful to the various groups in looking at how to prioritize the issues, how to rank order them, how to have things that could be easily digested in summaries.

A second group was looking at how do we create a knowledge-base so there's a quick reference. We have a lot of information on our website, but looking for the website and drilling it down and things like this sometimes is not the easiest. So how can we make that easier? Alan Greenberg will be working on that particular group to explore new ways and how to make that easier for us.

And the third group really relates to participation and outreach. Sally Costerton will be helping to lead that group. Theresa Swinehart will look at the knowledge-base and I will be a part of the support staff for the priorities.

So in that vein, Fadi, wanted to continue that consultation and is having six community roundtables that is to broaden that base of consultations. So last night we met with the RALO leaders to hear their activities and their priorities and how we can work better together to achieve those common goals.

So that was very helpful. Again, I'm sorry for the late hour. We were there from 7:00 until past 8:00, but I think it was a worthwhile exercise. And the group decided that that would be good to have that at the next ICANN meeting as well.

So that is really kind of a summary of particular processes that we're looking at to make it easier and more user-friendly, so to say, to understand the topics that ICANN is looking at, making it easier for you to explain it to your community members, if you will, in the ALSes and others so that there can be that feedback mechanism and a better understanding.

So as I was talking to the interpreters there, I understand Spanish and French, I asked the English interpreter if she does English-to-English translation and we're working on that one as well. So to go from ICANN-speak to plain English, a challenge indeed.

So I will just stop there. I don't want to interfere with your regular scheduling. But thank you for allowing me to come to breakfast. If this is useful, I would like to do this. I know I usually meet with your executive committee on the Friday Joan of Arc session, but this is fine to be here as well. So thank you very much.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you very much for this, David. Thank you for this summary. I wasn't quite sure it was called Joan of Arc session. Okay. Would you like to take some questions if you wish? Okay, then let's open the floor for questions. Holly Raiche?

HOLLY RAICHE:

David, what was your takeaway from yesterday's meeting?

DAVID OLIVE:

For me, the takeaway was to see the commitment of the RALO leaders in the work that they're doing, what coordination and collaboration they still need to get some of their work done. And more importantly, I think since we had our global leaders from ICANN, that's the senior ICANN management, many of them don't get to hear. We report. There's reports all the time, but they don't get to hear firsthand from the people who are actually there and trying to get the group working well, organizing the work of ICANN. But also being honest saying that many people are not aware of ICANN or it's not easy to get the volunteers that we have, and we work hard for that.

So it's showing that the At-Larges are really our grass-root, the only grass-root part of the organization and they get to see the full display from the local ALS group to, of course, the Board of Directors work. And I think that's very helpful for them to do that. They, of course, look at resources. They, of course, look at personnel issues. They, of course, are concerned about the functioning and the operation of the organization. But this is I think a very important role.

Now, for the leaders, they were very well-prepared I could say. I'm happy to report they were very well-prepared in their remarks and I think our leaders were very pleased and impressed that it was a good exchange. Obviously they want to continue it, so that's another good sign.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thanks for this, David. Next is Evan Leibovitch.

EVAN LEIBOVITCH: Hi. Quantity versus quality. ALAC has been churning out more and more statements every year, but I want to get a feel for whether or not the sheer volume of things is the metric that you want to look for.

We constantly get feedback about needing clarification on things and this kind of thing. Would it be better if we actually produced fewer statements, but they went into more depth and they were a bit more over-reaching in their subject matter or do you like the idea of short, fast, and furious? Thanks.

DAVID OLIVE: Thank you, Evan. Quantity versus quality. Here's my view on that. At-Large has been increasing their advisory statements and policy statements. In the last few years, I've been very impressed by that. And that's a metric. Okay, great. It's now X number.

For me, that is a learning path. This is really great that you can get down to your communities and get some comment even as general as it may be, but that's kind of the first step. This is where priority might come in handy for you to say, "Well, maybe a two-paragraph commentary giving the temperature or the feel of the group through the entire ALAC process is helpful on some issues, but if there are really keen issues that you want to have an interest in – maybe it's a policy development process of the GNSO or it's something that the Board is working on – that a more in-depth study is necessary, then you should decide that.

But you've laid the path of having these other statements coming through that people are now aware of what they need.

Now, they may say, "Well, we need more analysis or more background to do a further statement," but at least you've created that path of advice creation and inputs that I think heretofore was hit or miss.

So to that extent, you can build upon the quantity and just briefness of some of the statements if you prioritize for more in-depth ones. So that's what I would say. I view it positive and I view it a two-way communication that you can increase depending on the priority of the issue you want to focus on.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND:

Thank you very much for this, David. Any other questions? I have a question for you with regards to policy development. In At-Large, we do have a core group of people that are pretty much following anything and everything that happens at ICANN, which is very taxing. But of course that's not something that you can expect from all At-Large Structures and from all ALS leaders.

Therefore, one of the functions of the RALOs is to try and also get their region, really the grass-roots to follow-up with everything that's going on or get them to focus on specific needs and so on.

And yet, the public comment periods are, as you know, 21 days plus 21 days. The translation of documents sometimes takes more than even 21 days. There are all sorts of things which this community – now, I'm not going to repeat them to you – but this community has complained about for a very long time indeed, and yet we're not seeing very much

of an improvement at the moment as far as the grass-roots are concerned.

If I was an At-Large Structure in Argentina, let's say, and was following the public comment process, I would have to get the document first translated in my language, and in most cases, the document is not translated, so I'd have to get it done myself with a local interpreter, let's say. That would take a few days. And by the time I even have an idea what the topic is about, the public comment is finished. And there doesn't seem to be very much leeway into this.

Have you really looked into this? And also with regards to having shorter timelines for having documents translated?

DAVID OLIVE:

The answer is yes on both accounts. Let me talk about the public comment improvements. There is a question of priorities, of course, but we hope to have this more in place toward the end of the year where we will change the process. We're waiting for some new tools to come in for our platforms to make this happen, but in the meantime, we're looking for a 40-45 day public comment period. The elimination of the reply comment period, a better scheduling and tagging to say that this is a top priority PDP of the GNSO as opposed to just an information paper for background, for example, so that you'll be able to see, "Ah, we want to focus on one, two and three, and not six, seven and eight," because it's maybe more just for your information as opposed to an input or a comment required."

In the meantime, since we have to have a lot of moving parts – the IT and processes and what not – we will roll out towards the end of the year webinars to instruct and talk about these changes so there’s not too much of a shift. But the big shift will be longer time periods for comment.

But we’ll also have flexibility for some place where you don’t need to give the groups time to adjust. So maybe they wanted a 40-day, 50-day, 60-day comment period because they have time and just want to have more inputs. There’s not a time-sensitive nature. So we want to give that to various groups as well.

In the interim, we’ve talked to staff and told them to be flexible. And to that extent, that’s what’s happening in the interim. So, unfortunately, some timelines are short and there was a 21-day comment period for an additional look at the accountability transition. It’s not always desirable, but sometimes that needs to happen as well.

But we look at the totality of the process to try to think of the timeframes, but as staff and what we’re instructing them to do is longer is better and be flexible if you’re requested to extend that a few more weeks or days to make sure you get a comment. Sometimes we get reports. The deadline is tomorrow and someone will write in saying, “We’re just about to finalize that. We need a few more days. Can we do that?”

The point is not to have a strict deadline to say, “Sorry. You’re two hours late. We don’t want to hear you.” The point that I have made to my colleagues is the purpose is to hear people and have their inputs.

Yes, you have deadlines, but you should be flexible about it so that the main purpose is to take in comments and not be strict on deadlines.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: And how far are we from a multilingual public comment system?

DAVID OLIVE: That's more of a challenge, because each of the groups developing things decide what they need to be translated. So for example, the SSAC – our Security and Stability Advisory Committee – just recently did two very good studies on how IANA functions and background on IANA.

So we asked them, "This is great. What more do you want?" Then they finally said, "Yes, we'd like it in the six languages." That's great. That's a first. We, of course, see a little more of that in the IANA transition and accountability. These are high-profile, very important to our organizations. That's great and we should do that.

The goal would be to have that more as a practice than as the exception and we'll try to work to that as well.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you, David. We have a queue with first Cheryl Langdon-Orr and then Fatima Cambronero.

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: If David leaves his mic on, I suspect I can project far enough to be picked up by the interpreters. Yes. I'm getting a yes.

Back in the dim, dark, distant days of ATRT 1, which of course is where the new sort of design on the [replied] comment period was an experiment – clearly, not one that was going to now work very successfully.

One of the other things we said was if there was a mechanism whereby staff working at the drafting team policy development work group level were able to in some way, shape or form share with each other, and indeed with the community, what’s coming – not that we know on the 30th of October “this will be out” but I’m still not seeing anything about that predictability. And I think if we’re making this a smarter system – and it sounds to me like it’s becoming a much more smarter system, and this is a good thing – can we get a little bit of that predictability in again? It would tick a box back in the old ATRT 1 thing.

The other point was with the translations, even the executive summaries would be valuable and I think we might be able to do more with less in some situations. Thank you.

DAVID OLIVE:

I didn’t mean to leave the calendaring out of it. That is part of the new process as well. That is easier within some groups – for example, the ccNSO or the GNSO. Once they initiate a policy development process, they have a pretty established timeline. That’s not the issue. The issue is other issues that come up. We didn’t know there would be an IANA transition, so how good was that calendar prediction? But it’s still important to do that.

The other element of that, though, Cheryl – thank you for raising it – is that we’ve also now been hearing comments that maybe we should pace these. And in the new process I’m looking at – and this has not [inaudible] review – I thought, well, maybe what we should do is have established periods, the 15th and the 30th of each month public comment requests will come out.

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Bless you.

DAVID OLIVE: Some people thought, “Oh, my gosh. What’s going to happen here?” But that might be – or to say on the 15th “these six are coming out, but we’re going to hold because of the workload or priority. Maybe we’ll hold that to the next month,” or something like that. Those are elements we’re looking at and we’ll be consulting with the community about what they think about those ideas.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you very much, David. The page “upcoming public comments” exists. It’s just empty for some reason. There’s no great work to do.

Next we have Fatima Cambronero, then I’ve got Alan Greenberg, and then Dev Anand Teelucksingh. Fatima, you have the floor.

FATIMA CAMBRONERO: Thanks, Olivier. I will speak in Spanish. When you refer to the modification to the public comment process, I think probably this could

also be a good opportunity to improve the notification system, public comments that are still open. Probably we could have one summary every month and we could send a list. I am on many lists, but I don't recall having received this. So probably we could receive an e-mail once a month saying that these are all the open issues that are open still for public comment.

So perhaps if we miss the deadline, maybe you can realize that you still have time to make a public comment, because I believe this is not [there]. That is, I'm listed in mailing lists, but [they] don't really receive that. So that is just a suggestion, because the period will be extended – probably once a month will not be enough to have that notification. Thank you.

DAVID OLIVE:

I like that comment, and the reason some of the delay on the technical side is that, as you know, if you're doing any purchase online and you complete the purchase, almost instantaneously, you get an e-mail that says, "Thank you very much. Here's the..." That's what I would like to have happen in the public comment system, both when you send in a comment for something – we receive that and we send it to the Working Group X.

Notification, we're not there yet. What we try to do in the policy update – on the monthly update – is list the current issues before public comment. So on the policy update, if you subscribe to that, that's the first thing we put to kind of remind people.

But your point is a more general reminder. And using those who subscribe, there are about 7,000 subscribers to our policy monthly report. That could be a good basis.

And once we create some sort of interactive e-mailing system – notification system – we can build on that to kind of say, “This month, here are the ones that are still open. Here’s the ones that are closed.” A report that would be quick. So that’s a good one.

Thank you.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thanks very much, David. Next is Alan Greenberg.

ALAN GREENBERG: Thank you. With regards to that, I’ll make a modification. Let the users say how often they want the reminder. The world seems to be divided between push and pull people. Lots of people want various things where they have to go and look at it at their leisure. I need reminders. And I would be delighted if every Monday morning or every Friday night or something I get a list of the open comments. So just in case something slips through the cracks and I didn’t notice it when the original announcement came out or I didn’t see it or it didn’t come out, or it wasn’t there, was nothing pushed, I can see a reminder. You need to tailor it to people’s needs.

If I was the chair of ALAC, for instance, in some hypothetical world...

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Dream on.

ALAN GREENBERG: Oh, it's not going to happen? Great. [laughs]

I would want a reminder. As a matter of fact, if I was policy staff responsible for keeping policy issues up-to-date, I'd want a [inaudible] like that once a week or once a day or something; I don't know. People can pick their own intervals.

You need to tailor this to people's needs and the people's needs who are just curious about what ICANN is doing are different from someone who's operationally doing it. I do have more, but go ahead.

DAVID OLIVE: On that point, Alan, I have created about two or three years ago a list called the SO/AC Info Alert List of which I send to the chairs things that I think that are important in my view.

The trouble is – and from my point of view, I'm cautious not to spam people. We already have a lot of e-mails from ICANN, but I do do that. Maybe we should expand it to the RALO leaders in some sort of information sharing thing – I'm happy to do that as well – as reminders. But we can customize that. I appreciate that. That's what we try to do.

And when we have these regular discussions with the chairs, to point out those priority areas.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Good point.

ALAN GREENBERG: I know I go onto various lists, both ICANN and non-ICANN.

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