

ICANN | GAC

Governmental Advisory Committee

Kigali, Rwanda, 17 June 2024

GAC Communiqué – Kigali, Rwanda¹

The Kigali Communiqué was drafted and agreed in a hybrid setting, during the ICANN80 Policy Forum, with some GAC participants in Kigali, Rwanda, and others remotely. The Communiqué was circulated to the GAC immediately after the meeting to provide an opportunity for all GAC Members and Observers to consider it before publication, bearing in mind the special circumstances of a hybrid meeting. No objections were raised during the agreed timeframe before publication.

I. Introduction

The Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) met in Kigali, Rwanda, in a hybrid setting including remote participation, from 10 to 13 June 2024.

Ninety (90) GAC Members and nine (9) Observers attended the meeting.

The GAC meeting was conducted as part of the ICANN80 Policy Forum. All GAC plenary and working group sessions were conducted as open meetings.

High Level Government Meeting

The GAC expressed its sincere appreciation to the Government of Rwanda for hosting the fifth High Level Government Meeting on 9 June 2024. The meeting was attended by 81 delegations, including 12 Intergovernmental Organizations, and provided a valuable forum for Ministers, Vice-Ministers

¹ To access previous GAC Advice, whether on the same or other topics, past GAC communiqués are available at: <https://gac.icann.org/>

and senior officials to address a range of issues including: the importance of the multi-stakeholder model for governance of the Internet; the necessary cooperation between policy makers and the technical community for effective governance of new technology; challenges and initiatives to ensure digital inclusion and meaningful connectivity to the Internet. Furthermore, the GAC expressed its sincere appreciation to Ministers, Vice-Ministers and senior officials who attended different sessions during the ICANN80 Policy Forum.

ICANN CEO

The GAC conveys its congratulations to ICANN for the successful conclusion of the selection process for the new CEO, and transmits its felicitations to Mr. Kurt Erik "Kurtis" Lindqvist for his new role starting in December 2024, wishing him every success for this important position. The GAC looks forward to engaging with ICANN's new CEO to discuss ways and means towards continued efficiency and effectiveness in the fulfilment of ICANN priorities, as well as fostering excellence in the management of ICANN Org's human talent.

II. Inter-Constituency Activities and Community Engagement

Meeting with the ICANN Board

The GAC met with the ICANN Board and discussed:

- GNSO Statements of Interest
- Resolution of Contention Sets
- Public Interest Commitments and Registry Voluntary Commitments
- Name Collisions
- DNS Resiliency
- New DNS Technologies
- Applicant Support in Next Round of New gTLDs

Meeting with the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)

The GAC met with members of the ALAC and discussed:

- Mechanisms of Last Resort/Private Resolution of Contention Sets in New gTLDs
- New gTLD Applicant Support Program

Meeting with the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)

The GAC met with members of the GNSO Council and discussed:

- The High Level Government Meeting of 9 June 2024
- GNSO Statements of Interest (SOIs)

- Next Round of New gTLDs, including:
 - Applicant Support Program
 - Singular/plural TLDs
 - Implementation Review Team
 - Resolution of contention sets
 - Public Interest Commitments (PICs)/Registry Voluntary Commitments (RVCs)
- Latin script diacritics in New gTLDs
- Urgent Requests for disclosure of registration data
- Registration Data Accuracy

Cross Community Discussions

GAC Members participated in relevant cross-community sessions scheduled as part of ICANN80, including “Navigating the Multistakeholder Approach: The ICANN Community's Role in Global Internet Governance”. GAC members welcomed the active engagement of ICANN Org and the ICANN community in ongoing discussions, such as the Global Digital Compact, the WSIS+20 review process, as well as the active involvement in the recent NETmundial+10 event, acknowledging its Outcome Statement, which includes the São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines.

III. Internal Matters

1. GAC Membership

Following the welcoming of Libya as a GAC member during the ICANN76 Cancún meeting, and Bolivia during the ICANN77 Washington D.C. meeting, the GAC welcomed the Principality of Liechtenstein as a Member during the ICANN80 Kigali meeting.

There are currently 183 GAC Member States and Territories and 39 Observer Organizations.

2. GAC Elections

The 2024 election process for the positions of GAC Chair and GAC Vice-Chairs will be initiated shortly after the ICANN80 meeting with the start of the nomination period. The nomination period will close on 25 September 2024. If needed, a voting process will be conducted from 19 October until 12 November 2024, ending during the ICANN81 public meeting where the election results will be announced.

3. GAC Working Groups

The GAC notes and welcomes the appointment of Janos Drienyovszki from the European Commission as a co-Chair of the Public Safety Working Group (PSWG). The GAC and the PSWG extend their sincere appreciation to Cathrin Bauer-Bulst who is stepping down from this position, for both her valuable service and notable contributions to the Working Group and the GAC.

The GAC notes and welcomes the appointment of Tracy Hackshaw from the Universal Postal Union as a co-Chair of the Underserved Regions Working Group (USRWG). The GAC and the USRWG extend their sincere appreciation to Tepua Hunter who previously stepped down from this position, for both her valuable service and notable contributions to the Working Group and the GAC.

- **GAC Public Safety Working Group (PSWG)**

The GAC PSWG continued its work to advocate for improved measures to combat DNS Abuse and promote lawful, effective access to domain name registration data.

The PSWG participated in a session to brief the GAC on WHOIS and Data Protection Policy developments that included the topics of:

1. Ongoing discussions pertaining to “Urgent Request” scenarios for the request of registration data in circumstances that pose an imminent threat to life, serious bodily injury, critical infrastructure, or child exploitation;
2. A review of usage data generated by the first 6 months of the Registration Data Request Service (RDRS), the PSWG’s ongoing work in the GNSO Standing Committee assigned to review such data, and suggestions for raising awareness of RDRS via use of existing WHOIS/RDAP systems; and
3. The relevance of the newly restarted Privacy/Proxy Accreditation Implementation Review Team with respect to the RDRS and successor systems.

Regarding DNS Abuse, the PSWG appreciated the perspectives provided by leaders from Africa during a panel convened by the GAC Topic Leads on DNS Abuse, which highlighted regional experiences in the shared global fight against technical abuse categories such as phishing, botnets, and spam.

Finally, in bilateral outreach the PSWG met with multiple stakeholder groups within the ICANN community, holding discussions on topics of shared interest in the week prior to ICANN80.

- **GAC Underserved Regions Working Group (USRWG)**

The GAC Underserved Regions Working Group (USRWG) held a Capacity Development and an African Engagement session on 11 June 2024. Being the first ICANN meeting in Africa in five years, this was an opportunity for session leads to tailor an agenda according to the needs of GAC members from the region.

The first session discussed the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority's (IANA) role in the delegation and transfer of ccTLDs. The various questions and comments from members demonstrated the importance and relevance of the topic, particularly as ccTLDs are considered a national asset.

Continuing from the discussions during the Capacity Development session, members had the opportunity to learn more about efforts within the region from Smart Africa and the Coalition for Digital Africa, who reported on their activities and Internet Governance projects in Africa.

A post-session survey will be conducted to gather feedback from GAC members, to guide the USRWG on future workshops and capacity development initiatives. In light of the high engagement demonstrated by members, the working group will continue to explore new modalities to enhance capacity development initiatives through webinars and workshops, intersessionally and during ICANN meetings.

The Capacity Development planning team expresses its appreciation for the contributions of ICANN org, IANA/PTI, experts from the ICANN community and Smart Africa.

4. GAC Strategic Planning

Building on a process initiated in December 2023 by the GAC Chair and Vice-Chairs, considering the GAC plenary discussion during ICANN79 in San Juan, and several consultations of the GAC Membership intersessionally, the GAC finalized and endorsed the 4-year GAC Strategic Plan (2024-2028) and the corresponding 2024/2025 GAC Annual Plan².

The GAC expects that these Strategic and Annual plans will serve to bolster the GAC's proactive stance in ICANN deliberations, increase the Committee's readiness to provide timely and effective advice and policy input, and to assist in communicating the GAC's priorities with higher levels of governments, new GAC Members, and ICANN stakeholders.

² The 4-year GAC Strategic Plan (2024-2028) is appended to this Communiqué and available with the 2024/2025 Annual Plan on the GAC website at <https://gac.icann.org/activity/gac-strategic-planning>

5. Capacity Development

The ICANN80 GAC Capacity Development session provided ample information about what ccTLDs are, how they are managed, the role of the managers within their communities and relation with ICANN Org and IANA/PTI, as well as on the evaluation criteria for ccTLDs managers (string eligibility, incumbent consent, public interest, local presence, stability, operational competency), the different forms of assessment for delegation, transfer, revocation and retirement, and the evaluation and transfer processes. The GAC would like to thank ICANN Org and IANA/PTI for their contribution and efforts for the success of this informative session.

IV. Issues of Importance to the GAC

1. Transparency, GNSO Statements of Interest (SOIs) and Code of Ethics

The GAC welcomes the will expressed by the Board to develop a code of ethics to, inter alia, address transparency issues in SOIs. We look forward to community discussions ahead of ICANN81 based on a discussion draft presented by the Board. The GAC expects that transparency conditions contained in the code are binding for participants in policy development processes.

2. Registry Voluntary Commitments (RVCs) / Public Interest Commitments (PICs) in New gTLDs

The GAC notes that the Board resolved on 8 June 2024³ that, per the ICANN Bylaws, RVCs in New gTLD applications that “*restrict content in new gTLDs*” will neither be accepted nor enforced by ICANN as part of its contractual relationship with registries. In this regard, in order to maximize predictability for applicants, governments, and other participants in the community, the GAC requests that the Board, in consultation with the community, provide clear guidance well before the launch of the forthcoming application round regarding what the Board will consider as RVCs “restricting” content. Such guidance should include illustrative examples of RVCs which would, and would not, involve the restriction of content. The GAC also recognizes that other arrangements, outside of the new gTLD Registry Agreements, could be made between the registry and other parties which address content restrictions and their enforcement.

In its resolution, the Board acknowledges that this decision “*may limit the types of acceptable registry commitments, and in turn narrow applicants' options for addressing third-party concerns that arise from Objections, Advice, or comments with respect to their applied-for gTLD strings*”.

The GAC wishes to also underline that this approach will impact the manner in which the GAC may consider applications and limits the types of remedial actions that can be taken to address GAC concerns. The GAC will continue discussing this matter and particularly in relation to possible remedial actions.

³ ICANN Board [Resolution 2024.06.08.08](#)

3. New gTLDs Subsequent Procedures Implementation Review Team (IRT)

During the bilateral session with the GNSO, the GAC posed a question about the high cost of the Registry Service Provider technical evaluation fee planned for the New gTLD process. The GAC expresses its concerns regarding financial barriers to entry for new applicants participating in the next round of gTLDs, specifically those from within the underserved regions.⁴

4. DNS Abuse

The GAC welcomed a session focused on DNS Abuse issues and trends in Africa. Speakers representing regulatory agencies and ccTLD operators in the Africa region shared the view that, given the growth of the number of domains in the region, DNS Abuse will likely become a growing challenge and priority. Speakers shared different examples of phishing cases in the financial sector. One speaker noted that the recent DNS Abuse contract amendments at ICANN for gTLD registries and registrars will likely have a positive impact on mitigating DNS Abuse in the region. Speakers in the session also urged further collaboration across the African region to address DNS Abuse, including among ccTLD operators. The GAC would welcome such learning opportunities from other regions on good practices to prevent and mitigate DNS Abuse at future ICANN meetings.

The GAC looks forward to continuing discussions on DNS Abuse before and during ICANN81 where it expects to receive updates from ICANN Compliance on the implementation of contract amendments and from the Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC) on Name Collisions (and its impact on the next round gTLD) as well as on advances in DNS Abuse mitigation.

5. DNSSEC

The GAC understands the importance of choice regarding the implementation of DNSSEC for individual registrants and encourages all registrants to enable it, especially those who operate important or critical services. The GAC emphasises that it is important for all parties to work together to promote the adoption of DNSSEC and invites participants in the ICANN community to exchange good practices and approaches to promote the adoption of DNSSEC.

6. Registration Data Request Service (RDRS)

The GAC appreciates ICANN Org's efforts to enhance RDRS and provide regular reporting of usage metrics. Six months into the RDRS pilot, the GAC finds that the usage of the tool could be further increased, and that the metrics have already shed light on potential improvements that could help the service meet its intended purpose. In this respect, the GAC recalls that several suggestions for improvement were already formulated in the San Juan Communiqué and stands ready to continue

⁴ GAC USRWG definition of underserved regions:

<https://gac.icann.org/working-group/gac-working-group-on-underserved-regions-usrwg>

its work on the RDRS Standing Committee to address challenges and maximize the utility of the system for both requestors and registrars.

The GAC reiterates the importance of the continued promotion of and education about RDRS to ensure the community, including both requestors and registrars, are aware of the uses and limits of this pilot program, as well as its intended purpose, to inform work toward an eventual Standardized System for Access and Disclosure (SSAD). When it comes to raising awareness amongst potential end users of the RDRS and SSAD, the GAC believes that providing a link to the RDRS via the ICANN registration data lookup tool could help in reaching potential RDRS users who may not be aware of the pilot. As stated in the ICANN79 San Juan Communiqué, the GAC continues to support efforts to maximize participation in the Registration Data Request Service (RDRS) and reiterates that widespread use of the pilot by both registrars and requestors will help the RDRS meet its intended purpose.

Where a registrar uses an affiliated proxy service provider, the GAC encourages registrars to consider making disclosure decisions in response to RDRS requests on behalf of their affiliated proxy service provider.

Finally, the GAC notes that both requestors and registrars have identified challenges with regard to the RDRS and encourages all parties to work together in the spirit of consensus to achieve improvements.

7. Registration Data Accuracy

The GAC reiterates that registration data accuracy is an important element in building trust for Internet users, as well as in law enforcement, cybersecurity, investigations to enforce Intellectual Property Rights, domain name registration management, and other legitimate third-party interests.

The GAC takes note of the GNSO's decision to pause the work of the Accuracy Scoping Team while the Contracted Parties and ICANN finalize their forthcoming Data Processing Specification (DPS) and appreciates the GNSO's update at ICANN80 on the status of these negotiations. The GAC stresses the importance of completing the DPS as soon as possible so the community can resume efforts towards scoping policy work on accuracy of domain name registration data.

8. Support for the Privacy and Proxy Services Accreditation Implementation Review Team

The GAC appreciates ICANN Org's efforts to facilitate a process to explore options for the implementation of recommendations that are still relevant from the previous Policy Development Process on Privacy and Proxy Services Accreditation Issues (PPSAI). Doing so will ensure the community is able to produce evidence-based registration data policy, including on the use of Privacy and Proxy services.

V. GAC Consensus Advice to ICANN Board

The following items of advice from the GAC to the Board have been reached on the basis of consensus as defined in the ICANN Bylaws⁵:

1. Applicant Support Program (ASP)

a. The GAC advises the Board:

- i. To take final decisions on successful Applicant Support Program (ASP) applicants, who applied within the twelve month time period, at the conclusion of that period as opposed to on a first come, first served basis. This would mean that no preference is given to applicants who applied earlier in the twelve month period, and will help ensure underserved regions⁶ are not at a disadvantage through the ASP.
- ii. To invite members of the community with relevant expertise to monitor and participate in the ASP Application Evaluation process that will result in final decisions on ASP application outcomes. The GAC signals its willingness to fully participate in this process.
- iii. To initiate a facilitated dialogue, involving representatives from the GAC, GNSO and the ALAC, to assess the feasibility of leveraging (including contracting and financing the services of) a platform to which new gTLDs, supported through the ASP, could move to eventually operate their own back-end services.
- iv. To develop a report outlining the results and outputs of the Engagement and Outreach Plan according to the stated timeline⁷ i.e.
 - May 2024: Launch Awareness Campaign (including priority outreach to underserved regions).
 - June 2024 (ICANN80): Stakeholder Consultations
 - Conduct stakeholder consultations to gather feedback on the ASP's design and eligibility criteria.
 - Engage with potential applicants to understand their needs, challenges, and expectations regarding the ASP.
 - Use feedback to refine ASP guidelines and communication materials.

⁵ Bylaws section.12.2.(a)(x) The advice of the Governmental Advisory Committee on public policy matters shall be duly taken into account, both in the formulation and adoption of policies. In the event that the Board determines to take an action that is not consistent with Governmental Advisory Committee advice, it shall so inform the Governmental Advisory Committee and state the reasons why it decided not to follow that advice. Any Governmental Advisory Committee advice approved by a full Governmental Advisory Committee consensus, understood to mean the practice of adopting decisions by general agreement in the absence of any formal objection (“GAC Consensus Advice”), may only be rejected by a vote of no less than 60% of the Board, and the Governmental Advisory Committee and the Board will then try, in good faith and in a timely and efficient manner, to find a mutually acceptable solution. The Governmental Advisory Committee will state whether any advice it gives to the Board is GAC Consensus Advice.

⁶ GAC definition of underserved regions in the [GAC Underserved Regions Working Group Terms of Reference](#)

⁷ [New gTLD Program Outreach and Engagement Plan](#), p.14

RATIONALE

- i. The ASP application submission period is twelve months. In that time period, applications that are compiled and submitted earlier in the process should not be given an advantage over applications submitted later in the process. Giving applications submitted earlier in the window an advantage, in terms of earlier evaluation, could detrimentally impact organizations applying from underserved regions, who will likely take longer to prepare applications due to the need to access enhanced services, for example, translation services into their native languages, i.e. in languages other than the six (6) official United Nations languages. It will also take longer to raise awareness of the ASP and its benefits with those without existing connections to the ICANN community. The GAC wants to mitigate against a scenario where places for 'successful applicants' have been filled before applicants from underserved regions have had an opportunity to apply in the time period advertized.
- ii. Given that members of the community have continued to express a high level of interest in the delivery of an ASP that facilitates global diversification of the new gTLD program, the GAC is of the view that applicants through the program, and the program itself, would benefit from having non-conflicted members of the community, including the GAC, monitor and participate in the ASP Application Evaluation process.
- iii. The Board has issued several useful questions to the GAC on the GAC's previous ICANN79 Advice to *"explore the potential of leveraging (including contracting and financing the services of) a platform to which new gTLDs, supported through the ASP, could move to eventually operate their own back-end services"*. In order to develop a response to these questions with completeness, and duly considering the views and expertise of the wider multistakeholder community, the GAC proposes engaging in a dialogue with representatives from the GNSO and ALAC to assess the feasibility of this and to potentially develop a proposal, in a timely manner, for a way forward.
- iv. The GAC appreciates the publication of the 'New gTLD Program: Next Round Engagement and Outreach Plan', which included a high-level plan for outreach on the Applicant Support Program. The GAC looks forward to receiving the itemized costs, detailed scope and clear metrics of success (including specific targets) to accompany the plan. In that regard, the GAC appreciates the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) published that will be used to assess program success after implementation, and looks forward to receiving associated KPI targets that will be used to measure ongoing progress in real-time as the program is implemented. The GAC believes that such an approach can only be of positive benefit to the success of the ASP, and would allow for course corrections as deemed necessary during implementation, as opposed to waiting until the end of the program to conduct an assessment.

2. Auctions: Mechanisms of Last Resort/Private Resolution of Contention Sets in New gTLDs

a. The GAC advises the Board:

- i. To prohibit the use of private auctions in resolving contention sets in the next round of New gTLDs.
- ii. To urgently initiate a focused community-wide discussion (including with the GAC and ALAC) on the resolution of contention sets, with a view to finding alternatives to private auctions and ICANN auctions of last resort, before the ICANN Board takes any action in a manner that may be inconsistent with the ICANN77 Washington D.C. Communiqué GAC Consensus Advice.

RATIONALE

The GAC notes the Board Resolution of 8 June 2024⁸ as well as the update provided by the Board on its current thinking about resolution of contention sets in relation with the ICANN77 Washington D.C. GAC Consensus Advice:

- i. To take steps to avoid the use of auctions of last resort in contentions between commercial and non-commercial applications [...]*
- ii. To ban or strongly disincentivize private monetary means of resolution of contention sets, including private auctions.*

Pursuant to GAC Consensus Advice regarding the use of private auctions, noting the recent Board resolution and discussions between GAC, ALAC and other parties during ICANN80, the GAC has concluded that private auctions should be prohibited for the next round of New gTLDs.

The GAC further notes that according to its resolution, the Board intends to take an action that is potentially inconsistent with the above GAC Consensus Advice concerning auctions of last resort in contentions between commercial and non-commercial applications. In this regard, and with a view to identifying alternative means to resolve such contention sets, the GAC advises that before taking a decision and engaging in a potential Bylaws-mandated process with the GAC, the Board initiates a focused community-wide discussion, including ALAC, GAC and other parts of the community, in order to identify, inter alia, possible ways forward consistent with the GAC Consensus Advice.

⁸ICANN Board [Resolution 2024.06.08.15](#)

VI. Follow-up on Previous Advice

The following items reflect matters related to previous Consensus Advice provided to the Board.

1. Applicant Support Program (ASP)

The GAC stated in its ICANN79 San Juan Communiqué Advice (Advice 1.a.ii) that the communications and outreach strategy for the ASP “*must include details on building awareness of Universal Acceptance and Internationalized Domain Names and must leverage community connections to ensure underserved regions are reached*”. Therefore, the GAC looks forward to receiving detailed plans on these core aspects of the ASP by mid-Q3 2024 (August 2024).

The Board also accepted the ICANN79 GAC advice (Advice 1.a.iii) for ICANN to undertake an assessment of the appropriate budget to support the ASP and the associated communications and outreach strategy. As part of its scrutiny, the GAC requests that ICANN provide specific budgetary figures matched with planned activities for the ASP communications and outreach strategy, not necessarily including the estimated fees ICANN will use for the public relations firm it will hire to support ASP outreach, by mid-Q3 2024 (August 2024).

Additionally, the GAC requests a session by mid-Q3 2024 (August 2024) with the relevant ICANN org ASP and Outreach, Engagement and Communications leads to discuss the communications and outreach strategy and the financial plan that will support the ASP. This should be arranged well before stakeholder mapping is finalized and a grassroots campaign is launched, so that the GAC has an opportunity to comprehensively review and provide feedback on these plans ahead of implementation.

2. Urgent Requests for Disclosure of Registration Data

The GAC takes note of the letter sent by the Board to the GNSO Council concerning the “Dialogue with GNSO Council on EPDP Phase 1 Recommendation 18 (Urgent Requests)”⁹. The GAC appreciates the acknowledgment from the Board that “*the proposed timeline - whether one, two, or three business days - does not appear to be fit for purpose*” and that “*a much shorter response timeline, i.e., minutes or hours rather than days, would seem to be more appropriate*” for situations that pose an imminent threat to life, serious bodily harm, critical infrastructure, or child exploitation. The GAC appreciates that, in the absence of authentication and validation, it may be difficult for registrars to determine whether requestors are who they claim to be.

It is the GAC’s understanding that the GNSO needs to provide input on the next steps, building on the Board’s conclusion that “*the proposed urgent response policy is not fit for purpose and must be revisited*”.

⁹ <https://gnso.icann.org/sites/default/files/policy/2024/correspondence/sinha-to-dibiase-03june24-en.pdf>

The GAC urges the GNSO Council and the Board to take any necessary steps in an expeditious manner to “*establish a clear process and a timeline for the delivery of a policy on Urgent Requests for domain name registration data*”, given the vital public safety interests related to such requests, as per the ICANN79 San Juan GAC Advice.

Appreciating that input from Law Enforcement Authorities will be needed to address some of the Board’s concerns, the GAC stands ready to contribute to the work of the GNSO in relation to possible solutions for authentication of requestors via the work of the Public Safety Working Group, which has already started. The GAC highlights, however, that discussions on the authentication of Law Enforcement Agency requestors and on the response time for Urgent Requests should proceed in parallel and commence before ICANN81, to address the issue of Urgent Requests as soon as possible.

VII. Next Meeting

The GAC is scheduled to meet next during the ICANN81 Annual General Meeting in Istanbul, Türkiye, on 9-14 November 2024.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028

Endorsed by the GAC on 17 June 2024

GAC Mission, Vision and Values Statement

Consistent with ICANN's Article of Incorporation and ICANN's Bylaws, including ICANN's Mission, Commitments and Core Values, in the following statements, the GAC aims to propose specific statements for the sole purpose of the Committee's Strategic Planning.

Mission

To provide public policy advice to ICANN on issues that affect the stability, security, and global interconnectedness of the Internet's unique identifier systems and to exercise its powers and rights to ensure accountability of the ICANN Board and organization, as a Decisional Participant in ICANN's Empowered Community.

Vision

The GAC envisions a future where the Internet's unique identifier systems remain a trusted and reliable foundation for the global digital ecosystem, reflecting the needs of all users and stakeholders across the globe.

Values

- **Transparency and Accountability:** The GAC strives for open and inclusive policy development processes that ensure all voices are heard.
- **Multistakeholder Governance:** We recognize the importance of a collaborative approach where governments, the private sector, civil society, and the technical community work together for the benefit of the internet.
- **Global Policy Consideration:** We advocate for policies that are developed with a global perspective, taking into account the needs of diverse communities and cultures.
- **Stability and Security:** We prioritize the stability and security of the Internet's unique identifier systems to ensure their continued smooth operation.
- **Human Rights and International Law:** the GAC's values center on harnessing the use of digital technology, and specifically the Internet's unique identifier systems, for the benefit of humanity, upholding human rights and international law in the context of the digital age.

GAC Strategic Objectives 2024-2028

1) Role for Governments in ICANN

In support of reaffirming the critical role of governments within the ICANN multistakeholder model, the GAC will seek to ensure that governments can effectively pursue their public policy interests, through both existing and future ICANN processes and procedures. In particular, the GAC will work to assess whether current ICANN structures provide sufficient and meaningful opportunity for the GAC, to develop, influence, and modify policy outcomes.

2) Effectiveness of the Governmental Advisory Committee

The GAC will seek to increase active and meaningful participation of GAC Members in its deliberations and operations. The GAC will also work to enhance its effectiveness as a participant in the multistakeholder processes of ICANN, including by ensuring that the voice of GAC members is expressed and appropriately represented, and by leveraging collaboration and alignment with other ICANN constituencies.

3) Future Rounds of New gTLDs

Leveraging the experience and lessons learned from previous rounds of New gTLDs, including on their costs, benefits and accessibility, the GAC will seek to ensure that any future rounds of New gTLDs:

- Promote competition, consumer trust and consumer choice;
- Contribute to reducing the digital divide, in particular through the support of applicants from underserved and underrepresented regions and the promotion of Internationalized Domain Names
- Incorporate appropriate security, stability and resiliency safeguards
- Include appropriate procedures and capabilities for the GAC to address unexpected issues arising from specific or categories of applications, in particular issues affecting the global public interest such as Geographical Names.

4) DNS Abuse

The GAC will engage proactively in the work of the ICANN community and will provide advice on the activities of ICANN as they relate to governments' concerns regarding DNS Abuse¹, in order to:

- Promote the security, stability, and resiliency of the DNS
- Reduce the incidence and harm of DNS Abuse in existing gTLDs and New gTLDs
- Support the continuous improvement of DNS Abuse mitigation and prevention standards and their effective enforcement by ICANN
- Review and identify Best Practices in preventing and mitigating DNS Abuse for wider adoption
- Review, assess and encourage implementation of concrete measures to combat Phishing, Pharming, Botnets, Malware and Spam, in partnership with relevant institutions that deal with the issue.
- Provide GAC members capacity building workshops, sessions and potentially whole programs, either on a permanent basis or on an ad-hoc approach, in order to enhance understanding of these issues.

In its work, keeping in mind the ever-evolving nature of DNS abuse, the GAC will seek to survey GAC Members and Observers to better understand how to address concerns and meet expectations of governments.

¹ See [GAC Statement on DNS Abuse](#) (18 September 2019)

5) Domain Registration Data

The GAC will work to identify and recommend steps to promote and support the continued accessibility and improved accuracy of domain registration information, consistent with applicable privacy regulatory frameworks and in line with the GAC Principles Regarding WHOIS Services.²

Acknowledging continued evolution in the uses of WHOIS data, the GAC will work with the ICANN community to ensure that registration data policy reflects and addresses the complexities of the current domain name industry. This includes ensuring that legitimate requests made to registrars for domain registration data are met with access to meaningful data. This data should clearly articulate the roles of each of the entities participating in the registration of a domain name, including the authoritative source of registration data and the end user of the domain name (e.g. beneficial user) to avoid confusion with other entities such as privacy and proxy services and/or resellers.

6) Universal Acceptance

The GAC will work collaboratively among governments and with all stakeholders to promote a multilingual Internet and to provide universal access by ensuring that all domain names, including new Top-Level Domains, Internationalized Domain Names, and email addresses are treated equally and can be used by all Internet-enabled applications, devices, and systems.

7) Impact of New Technology on Internet Unique Identifier Systems

The GAC will increase understanding and raise awareness of the challenges and opportunities of new technologies as they relate to the Internet's unique identifier systems. To that end, the GAC will leverage the expertise in the ICANN Community, governments and beyond, to share information and consider potential implications, for the benefit of GAC members and all stakeholders.

8) Internet Governance

The GAC will work to ensure that governments, the ICANN Board, ICANN org and ICANN community participants are kept regularly apprised of developments and challenges in the Internet Governance (IG) ecosystem that impact the Internet's unique identifier systems. The GAC may coordinate efforts among Members to make contributions to global IG processes, within the framework of the multi-stakeholder model.

9) Internet Number Resources

The GAC will work to ensure that its members receive regular updates on developments pertaining to RIRs Internet's unique identifiers allocation policies, including policy changes. The GAC may coordinate efforts among interested Members to make informed contributions to relevant processes.

² The [GAC Principles Regarding WHOIS Services](#) (28 March 2007) recognize both the need to safeguard individuals' privacy and legitimate public interest uses of WHOIS data, including contributing to law enforcement investigations, combating fraud and misuse of intellectual property, complying with relevant laws, safeguarding the public, and contributing to user confidence in the Internet.