**GNSO FUTURES DISCUSSION GROUP – RESPONSES AS OF MAY 11, 2016**

1. **KEY CHALLENGES FOR ICANN**
2. **Perception/use of gTLDs**: (Participant 2)
   1. Public awareness of and confidence in gTLDs
   2. Protection of trademark owners’ rights with respect to gTLDs
   3. Corporate adoption and use of the gTLDs
3. **Budget:**
   1. Re-balancing the budget and organizational focus from GSE to supporting policy work and the community. (Participant 1)
   2. Work-flow managed with the community: ensuring that the work flow is managed with the community.  Work flow planning should be a core element of budget planning on a yearly basis.  Budget should be allocated accordingly. (Participant 1)
4. **Board:**
   1. Refocusing the Board: refocusing the Board on core and board matters (assessing and measuring against best practice); removing the Board from non-board appropriate engagement in community matters and policy; removing board from organizational matters that are supposed to be the remit of staff. (Participant 1)
   2. Limited Mission: ensuring that the organizational commitment to a limited mission (as per the post transition bylaws) and a MS bottom-up processes is maintained/reinforced. (Participant 1)
5. **Visa and travel requirements:** 
   1. US Visa challenges: one of the challenges, I have personally experienced 3 times, that I sincerely think the ICANN and the GNSO (specifically, the NCSG), is facing is the facilitation of US visa requesting for NCSG members. I think that ICANN have to do something in this area to facilitate US visa acquirement to attend the Intersessional meetings. (Participant 3)
6. **Stakeholder Engagement:**
   1. The vast majority of Internet ecosystem citizens are not present as engaged stakeholders:
      1. *Deep and broad stakeholder engagement that is consensus driven*: For ICANN, the organization operating the DNS, the multistakeholder model of governance is central to the stability and security of the global Internet. For ICANN’s governance to be robust and defensible, it needs broad and deep stakeholder engagement within its "bottom-up, consensus-driven, multistakeholder model" of Internet governance. (Participant 4)
      2. *Increased awareness of ICANN’s governance process to those outside of ICANN:* Given the financial Interests of ICANN contracted parties stakeholders and non-contracted business interests, it comes as no surprise that they are heavily and deeply represented as stakeholders in ICANN’s policy making and governance processes. It also comes as no surprise that the vast majority of Internet ecosystem citizens, the Internet users, are not present as engaged stakeholders within the ICANN community. Most individual citizens and groups are focused on how they may use the Internet as a tool, but they do not focus on the Internet and its governance per se unless Internet policy impacts them directly. ICANN is in a situation where it professes participation by citizens in a multistakeholder model of engagement, but where 99% (literally all) of those “citizens” don’t even know that this governance process exists. (Participant 4)
   2. Existing barriers and challenges to broad stakeholder engagement:

ICANN is not unaware of the challenge. It is devoting considerable resources to outreach efforts but such efforts have been greeted with limited success. This limited success has to do with a fundamental misunderstanding of context and the nature of the challenges faced both by ICANN and by those underrepresented stakeholder groups. The main barriers and challenges are

* + 1. *ICANN centricity resulting in lack of relevance.* A detailed look at ICANN’s website resources shows that ICANN’s awareness and capacity building is focused on promoting and explaining ICANN as an organization. As well intended as these efforts are, they are having minimal impact on informing and engaging a wider range of DNS users and Internet ecosystem stakeholders. A basic disconnect exists as this efforts are relevant to promote ICANN as an organizations but they do it without making it relevant to the targeted stakeholders. (Participant 4)
    2. *Staff centered strategy.* A current handicap for ICANN outreach and awareness building is the idea that it should be mainly executed and guided by ICANN staff, which is contrary to ICANN’s bottom up process of governance and engagement. (Participant 4)
    3. *Materials and language.* As a direct result of being staff centric, ICANN’s current outreach strategy devotes considerable effort and resources to the production and access to document and educational materials. Much of that material reads mainly as navigational tools for understanding ICANN. The material can be dense, in the language of ICANN, inappropriate in terms of the remits of the intended stakeholders, and occasionally already available in more suitable form from prospective outreach collaborators. (Participant 4)
    4. *Lack of understanding volunteers’ realities and needs.* The large majority of Internet citizens, be they individuals or representing, not-for-profit, civil society and community organizations, participation in Internet governance is as volunteers whose time and effort are over and above, or apart from, their jobs and primary activities. In contrast, contracted parties and much of the non-contracted business community engage in ICANN’s policy development and processes as part of their job or, in the case of those such as lawyers and academics, as part of building career capital. The time and effort required for engagement effectively excludes broader and deeper engagement by individuals and not-for-profit, civil society and community organizations. They simply do not have the resources and cannot provide the necessary time. (Participant 4)
  1. The dangers of under- and miss- representation of stakeholders:
     1. *More substantive participation with a wider audience (is needed).* If ICANN cannot find practical ways to enable wider and deeper participation in ICANN, this will threaten the very legitimacy of ICANN’s multistakeholder governance model. The main dangers are under and miss-representation. (Participant 4)
     2. *Under-representation.* Stakeholder groups’ interests are not factored into governance and policy making at all levels and a disproportionate weight is exercised by those with a voice and who have direct pecuniary interests. Gross under representation of stakeholders leaves ICANN’s governance and policy processes open to criticism that it is an inadequate multistakeholder process. (Participant 4)
     3. *Miss-representation of the large majority of Internet users (by a small minority).* Where a thin representation of the large majority gives disproportionate weight to the voice and positions of the few such stakeholders who claim to represent the vast number of unaware and unengaged citizens of the Internet ecosystem. (Participant 4)
  2. Balanced representation from all stakeholders (is needed) so that engagement in the formulation of ICANN policies is truly representative of the broadest community, reflecting all legitimate interests, as well as global diversity of culture and gender. (Participant 5)
  3. Overcoming volunteer burn-out with the likelihood that unless that’s achieved active participation will narrow down to the same few engaged stakeholders driving all key polices, often with vested interests. (Participant 5)
  4. Earning the respect of the wider global community as a truly International and well governed organization whilst remaining solely accountable to its global stakeholders for oversight. (Participant 5)
  5. No equal reciprocity or responsiveness between ICANN and some of its Stakeholders/ partners at various levels. It seems ICANN is making a lot of more effort than its Stakeholders. (Fellow B)
  6. Promoting the public interest in how ICANN governs the Internet and its impact on people:ICANN has not yet fully articulated publicly the connection between how it governs the Internet and its impact on people’s lives. While ICANN’s decisions are largely technical, they have tremendous potential implications for realizing a vision for society characterized by open architectural principles of the Internet, including openness, agility, collaboration and self-expression. Domain name registration policy could help to serve specific public interest goals but may be still be an absence of proactive debate on how ICANN would measure its success in societal terms. (Fellow A)

1. **Diversify voices heard in decision making/policy process:** 
   1. Finding ways to diversify the voices that get heard in the policy making process, as often a small group of dominant personalities tend to drive the work product. (Participant 6)
   2. Increasing Diversity and providing equal representation of all stakeholder communities from across the globe especially developing nations. (Fellow D)
2. **Role of governments:**  Making certain that the role of governments does not increase. (Participant 6)
3. **Changes within ICANN:**
   1. Making ICANN a TRULY transnational organization**:** The globalization of the Internet is bringing rapid changes that require constant reexamination of how the Internet operates, and I think makes it difficult to maintain let say ''a unified policy'' approach that will work worldwide. (Fellow A)
   2. Defining what it means to be part of ICANN:As involvement in ICANN grows, ICANN is committed to finding the best ways to ensure that those with whom it works support ICANN’s core mission and subscribe to similar principles. Sometimes when I am back to my country, people ask me: are you employed there? My answer is always clear: I am a volunteer. They can go on what is the meaning of being a Volunteer in ICANN?
   3. ICANN should look at new Strategies in order to make strengthen ICANN activities and responsiveness PENETRATION with EQUAL RESPONSIVENESS. I know it is not something automatic but, slowly and objectively. We have to continue thinking on why making more achievements. (Fellow B)
   4. Regulatory Challenges: ICANN needs to work closely with governments and advocate for free internet. (Fellow C)
   5. Regional priorities differ and must be addressed: This point is very clear. (Fellow C)
   6. Increased involvement of Corporate Sectors and universities: We need more engagement of private sector and university in all regions (Fellow C)
   7. ICANN’s global accountability: Being accountable not only to the ICANN Community but also to the whole Global Community. (Fellow D)
   8. Jurisdiction of ICANN and the new entity (PTI) post IANA transition (Fellow D)

**II. KEY CHALLENGES FOR GNSO**

1. **Funding:**
   1. Securing further funding for the work of the NCPH in PDPs, WGs, etc., and for ensuring that the community does not burn out. (Participant 1)
   2. Prioritization of work against available resources (Participant 5)
2. **IANA Transition:**
   1. Fuller understanding of what the potential changes may be/may result from the empowerment of the community post transition; and implementing any changes in NCPH in anticipation of being a part of the empowered community and the responsibilities that come along with it. (Participant 1)
   2. Related to the above and in anticipation of the
      1. *various stakeholder reviews that are to occur over the next years,*
      2. *post-transition WS2 accountability work, a full assessment of the accountability/ representativeness of the various parts of the NCPH. (Participant 1)*
3. **Policy Development:**
   1. Is the current GNSO structure broken to the degree that it requires urgent attention*?* In terms of effective/timely policy development, YES. URGENT. Many new complexity issues have to be dealt in much shorter time. For example, how to deal with new trademark applicants and how to solve disputes over geographic and other community applications. (CG)
   2. Socio-economic considerations: While formulating policies and fees structures GNSO also has to **take in consideration the socio- economic status of countries**. For example the cost for applying for a new GTLD along with its recurring costs are quite high for any developing nation. IGNSO has to take it into consideration while framing policies. (Fellow D)
   3. More **outreach** activities especially in developing nations. (Fellow D)
4. **Ensuring processes are developed to ensure capture does not occur by any ‘group’ on any specific topic** (Participant 5)
5. **Increased transparency and accountability**: Make the **processes more transparent and accountable**, ensuring robust consumer protection mechanisms. For example, the new GTLD policy needs correction. It needs to be made more accountable, the WHOIS database needs corrections and there has to be a strong focus on protecting consumers. (Fellow D)
6. **Find a place for Internet intermediaries:** Finding a place for Internet intermediaries who run DNS resolvers, but are non-contracted parties and also not ISPs - basically all the cloud companies, whose investment in DNS infrastructure is key to their business, and to the growth of the Internet. The BC is too broad for their specific interests, and the charter of the ISPCP is too restrictive. (Participant 6)
7. **Equal Involvement:** Facilitating equal involvement of all relevant parties whilst maintaining the balance between contracted and non-contracted parties. (Participant 5)
8. **Structural Reform:**
   1. **Decentralization of its structures from ICANN to Continents**: ICANN to make a new strategic structure further to what it has already done in regards with decentralization of its structures from ICANN to Continents; from continents to countries; from countries to various institutions including Academics depending on the nature of a specific structure. I mean strengthening the existing structure for more efficiency, effectiveness and achievements. (Fellow B)
   2. **Current structure and process restricts new stakeholders from forming new constituencies and tries to typecast them into existing structures.** For being truly multistakeholder, GNSO should make changes in the bylaws and mindset and encourage new stakeholders to form new constituency which may be outside the current existing structures as their requirements, modus operandi might be quite different from the current constituency structures. (Fellow C)
   3. **Change bylaws to decrease restrictions on new stakeholders from forming**. Current structure and process restricts new stakeholders from forming new constituencies and tries to typecast them into existing structures. For being truly multistakeholder, GNSO should make changes in the bylaws and mindset and encourage new stakeholders to form new constituency which may be outside the current existing structures as their requirements, modus operandi might be quite different from the current constituency structures. (Fellow D)
9. **Privacy and accuracy policies** (Fellow C)
10. **Consumer protection mechanism** (Fellow C)
11. **Regulatory issues - differ from region to region** (Fellow C)

**III. OVERCOMING BARRIERS (Constructed by Participant 4)**

How can we begin to overcome the barriers and challenges?

On the one hand, ICANN needs to reflect on how to make its processes more readily “digestible” for easier engagement. On the other hand, ICANN needs to reflect on how to make volunteer engagement easier. It needs to explore ways to facilitate the ease and effectiveness of volunteer effort in its governance processes, and it needs to do so by consulting with the constituencies and not by focusing on top down process assistance.

**WAYS TO ADDRESS BARRIERS:**

1. **Reversing the roles between ICANN staff and ICANN’s constituency organizations.**

The first step would be a reversal of roles between ICANN staff and ICANN’s constituency organizations. A communications strategy for outreach and engagement needs to start from ICANN’s supporting organizations (SOs), advisory committees (ACs) in collaboration with the stakeholder constituency groups who are the target of the outreach and greater engagement. ICANN staff should assist SOs and ACs, etc., to build strategy on a constituency understanding of context, and with the engagement of local expertise.

1. **Relevance through the creation of win/win situations.**

The starting point of all engagement has to be what is “in it” for everybody. Where is the win-win for both ICANN and the not-for-profit, civil society, community organization constituencies. Part of this will involve greater engagement within ICANN governance processes. Part of this will be greater involvement in the DNS system, as domain name holders and website owners. Part of this will be greater stakeholder involvement in the broader Internet issues as stakeholders and citizens of the Internet ecosystem. All of this can only be achieved by greater collaboration and clearer mutually agreed upon deliverable goals. In order to make ICANN relevant and for outreach to succeed, there has to be a “win” for them to become engaged in policy as citizens of the Internet ecosystem.

1. **Making the DNS the focus of ICANN.**

From a strategic perspective, efforts should not start with a focus on the inner working of ICANN, its multi stakeholder model or its policy development processes. Efforts can start by stressing the advantages of a secure, stable and reliable DNS, and the principles of a free and open internet, and they must quickly turn to Internet issues that actually confront not-for-profit, civil society and community groups from within the Internet ecosystem, or interest and attention will be lost. The task of outreach, with the goals of awareness and engagement, is to build an understanding of where, within the policy processes of the Internet, specific individual and organizational self-interests are on the policy agenda**.**