**NCSG Topics for Discussion with the Board, ICANN 64**

Thank you for this opportunity to provide material for our discussion with the Board in Kobe, ICANN 64.  We look forward to a fruitful discussion with you. It is our observation that our most successful conversations have occurred when we have been able to have a free and open dialogue, rather than a question and answer type of event, so please feel free to follow up on any of these topics during our hour with you on March 12.  We promise to come caffeinated and eager to talk.

**Topic 1:  Balancing of Security and Privacy**

The struggle to control cybercrime, and to educate individuals to avoid becoming victims of it, is becoming ever more important for the security of the DNS.  We have submitted an additional budget request to do education on that front, and hope to reach out to some of our members in underserved regions on this initiative.  With the success of the first phase of the EPDP, we hope for a more balanced and enlightened discussion on this topic, and we are wondering what your views are on ICANN’s role in this area, taking into account the narrow technical mission of ICANN.   In particular, how can we work with ICANN org to promote greater awareness among end users in our community, about the challenges?

**Topic 2:  Anti-harassment Project**

We are really pleased to hear that the Board is acting on the anti-harassment challenges that some community members have encountered at ICANN. As you may know, the NCSG has been active on this front. Can you please tell us more about the plans? We look forward to further discussions on this.

**Topic 3The Role of Civil Society at ICANN:  Outreach and Education Challenges**

As the representatives of the interests of non-commercial users and uses of the DNS, we have many academics in our midst, a large number of whom actually teach Internet governance in one discipline or another. We are acutely aware of the challenges that are faced in bringing non-participants in the actual domain name industry up to speed on the arcana of ICANN.  We discussed this briefly in the one on one call between the NCSG Chair and the CEO in January, and the response to questions about this issue was that ICANN was going to simplify the process. Can we hear more on this? We still want our members to gain a deeper understanding of the technical, economic, and legal issues surrounding the domain name industry. How are we going to achieve this?   Inclusion of civil society as regular participants is what marks the multi-stakeholder process as different, more open, and more participatory than the usual regulatory environment in nation states. We need to foster it. We are looking for fresh ideas.

**Solutions**

You have asked us to bring solutions to our planning challenges for ICANN, in an environment of flat or falling revenues and increasing demands on our resources.

Here are four ideas, but be assured that we will be using this week to brainstorm on how we can constructively contribute to this discussion.  We also look forward to hearing more about the next phase of the five year plan.

1.     What the Board, ICANN org, and the Community should be doing now to prepare for the successful implementation of these plans?  Please make three suggestions as concrete as possible, providing one each for the Board, ICANN org, and the Community.

* We would like to know more about how ICANN plans to achieve the cuts envisaged in order to keep the budget stable, without impacting policy work and support (which is a core ICANN activity), and while contributing millions of dollars to replenish the Reserve fund.  We look forward to engaging in a more detailed discussion of the ICANN budget.
* We have trouble getting our members to read all the documents that ICANN produces, including the 5 year plan. In part this is because ICANN documents can be difficult to find on the ICANN website, or, in the case of the budget, require downloading five different files with very similar names. We are confident that other SGs have this problem as well, although they are unlikely to admit it. (We did mention that we have a lot of teachers as members, familiar with those who do not read the assignments).  We are not going to have a useful discussion if people fail to read the plan. Why not bar the way to the cocktails/coffee until people answer a skill-testing question from the plan? Sprinkle the questions around the tables in the break area, and then quiz at strategic locations. Any variant of this idea that actually works with the venue would transmit two messages: you are serious about the importance of the plan, and folks had better read it.
* The open Board meeting can often be a tiny bit boring, it must be said.  Can you spark it up this year with a debate among members about the planning exercise, where they see the challenges, etc?  The community would be invigorated by seeing into your thought processes a little bit. You might want to invite PIR and ISOC, to organizations close to ICANN, to participate and contribute their own plans for greater metrics and accountability. Plenty of ICANN participants are unaware of the close dependencies in the ecosystem.
* How does ICANN org incentivize staff to save money?  We do not see, as part of the financial documentation which is made public, much detail about discretionary expenditures on the part of staff (e.g.travel, training, contracting, etc.)  Before we say another word, may we interject that the policy staff who we interact with are the most hard working, dedicated, amazing support and we truly appreciate their efforts. They also do not appear to be wallowing in lavish percs, and we would most certainly like to see them and the contracting money they control for research, legal support, and managing the PDP process protected. Nevertheless, we see cuts coming and we would like more information as to where they will be made.  Presumably if there are cuts coming for stakeholder support, there will be cuts for staff….but is there any way to further incentivize staff to make cuts to discretionary spending (e.g. could be tied to bonuses, ability to keep for instance the money saved by travelling in a cheaper mode and use it for training)?

2.     While the success of these plans lies primarily within ICANN, we all know that ICANN does not operate in a vacuum, and alliances and partnerships are important to our success.  How can we increase the likelihood that important allies and partners in the space are on the same page and working together to achieve common/agreed upon goals? Please provide one suggestion of something that could be done externally to improve trust and collaboration.

* What is “the space”?  Internet governance? The DNS industry?  Who are those important allies….mostly governments and industry associations and chambers of commerce, or would it include civil society and academia?  We do our best to contribute through research and scholarly activity in the Internet governance space, dispelling much disinformation about what is actually happening in the ICANN arena.  Through our civil society members and associations, we strive to get the facts out and promote a free and open Internet. Nothing contributes more to both of these activities than transparency and clear and honest communications about what is going on.  In this respect, we can usually see room for improvement.
  + 1. Why not invite the various stakeholders to join the CEO in his blogs, perhaps in a debate, instead of leaving us to comment separately in our own blogs?  We don’t expect to agree (and even if we manage to find partners out there externally who support ICANN and the MS model, we do not expect to find universal agreement).  This is a contentious space, lets confront that reality with more free and open communications. By presenting a sunny face on what is happening here in this MS environment, we more or less cede the communications to the public to journalists who constantly contradict ICANN’s official statements.
    2. What is the strategy for involvement with intergovernmental organisations, especially ITU, and how the MS community can contribute to this and provide meaningful input.   How can we exchange information between org and community on this issue? ICANN operates an office in Geneva, which is an important access point to nurture our relationship with the ITU.  What are the strategic plans for that office, the proposed activities, and the metrics for success? How can we help support this effort?