Candidate Statement GNSO Chair

Candidate: Rafik Dammak (NCSG – Asia/Pacific)

Country of Residence: Japan / Country of Origin: Tunisia

Dear Council Colleagues & Community Members,

I am honored to accept the nomination to the election for GNSO Council Chair from the ICANN Annual General Meeting 2018 to Annual General Meeting 2019. This year will be the first in my second term in GNSO Council.

SOI

I confirm that my current Statement of Interest (https://community.icann.org/display/gnsosoi/Rafik+Dammak+SOI) is up to date and contains all relevant information. My employer has no interest in ICANN policies or activities and my personal involvement in ICANN is separate from my day job.

Council Leadership team

I was appointed in the last AGM as the GNSO Council Vice-Chair for the Non-Contracted Party House and so I am a member of the current GNSO Council leadership team. I want to take the opportunity to thank and show gratitude to my colleagues Heather Forrest and Donna Austin for this experience and the work we did together. It is a rewarding experience in all fronts, which led me to believe that having a leadership team is the right approach for the council in terms of sharing the workload, making collegial decisions, ensuring regular information sharing and being responsive to challenges to cope with instead of counting on one individual to accomplish everything while ICANN itself has become more complex. If I am elected, I aim to continue this approach that started 3 years ago and investigate with the GNSO council how to make this practice more sustainable in terms of procedures and process based on the discussion started earlier this year. I commit to work closely with the appointed vice-chairs and finding our own approach as a team to cooperate efficiently and effectively.

I learned a lot from the Vice-Chair position in term of expectations, responsibilities, and roles for the GNSO chair. I also noticed the evolution of the role in term of responsibilities and areas to be covered and where the chair is supposed to answer and be the first contact point to different

parties such as staff or other SO/AC leaders for the GNSO and the council but also being designated as representative to Empowered Community. This evolution needs a new approach and more attention from the chair but also possibly a new job description to be discussed with the council which sets the expectations and commitments. I take as a role model the current chair who experienced those changes and included the leadership team in the discussion and decision-making and I am looking forward to considering her report which will definitely give guidance and useful recommendations. I do believe that I demonstrated neutrality during my term as Vice-Chair and show the ability to not get influenced by my own SG positions when decisions were made within the leadership team. I acknowledge how much it is important in such role to gain the trust and confidence of GNSO community and the Council.

The workload and commitments for the GNSO Chair are not negligible and in order to accomplish them, all measures must be taken to fulfill the expectations and tasks in a timely manner. My current employer introduced new work styles such as "flextime" and remote work or telework which give me more flexibility to schedule blocks of dedicated time for ICANN activities and able to respond quickly to requests or schedule calls. It also allows me to attend ICANN meetings. I am involved as a volunteer and has no financial interest in ICANN policies.

While the tasks and workload are increasing, the leadership team will remain accountable, transparent and responsible to GNSO community and the council and consulting regularly to ensure that decisions have a large support. If elected, I commit to keeping the council informed and included in all relevant matters. My leadership style is being a servant-leader, a leadership approach where the main goal is to serve, and seeking for large consensus within the group, listening to feedback and comments which I believe fits the community expectation of GNSO Chair. As someone who has been in Japan for 10 years, I am adept of the concept of continuous improvement known as Kaizen (改善) which goes beyond the slogan and is a daily practice and mindset.

Planning & Priorities

I believe that we have to build upon what was achieved and ensure the continuity of efforts already initiated till finalization:

- **Council Strategical Planning Session**

The GNSO council had a successful Strategical Planning Meeting early this year as the first edition. That helped councilors to have a common understanding of the council roles and responsibilities as a policy manager and in relation to the Empowered Community but more importantly to initiate a proper planning, to visualize the current workload and PDP activities and start an improvement process.

The next edition for the incoming GNSO Council is critical to set the roadmap and goals in term of PDPs and activities for next year.

- **PDP 3.0**

The PDP 3.0 effort which will reach an important milestone when the council approves the recommendations having consensus and launches the implementation work after Barcelona meeting. The discussion will continue with all outstanding items and possible new areas for improvement based on community input.

The incoming council has an important role to take ownership of this initiative and work on next steps. As a member of the current leadership team, I am committed to follow-up for this initiative and has all interest for its success.

- **Policy Management**

The GNSO council took the stance as policy manager to improve its oversight and monitoring of PDPs during the whole lifecycle (from initiation to implementation to policy reviews) and ensuring effectiveness, considering all issues and challenges faced in term of delivery, timelines, resources utilization, basically a better and responsible project and resources management of PDPs. The incoming GNSO leadership team has an important task here to keep the focus and the close monitoring.

- **Procedural Work**

The GNSO Council has to continue the work on related procedures for Empowered Community such templates with staff support. As the CCWG WS2 recommendations are to be adopted soon by board and implementation to be launched in the coming months, GNSO council will have to allocate resources and plan for implementing the relevant parts.

- **Current Workload & Challenges**

We expect for the incoming council to have those PDPs at the Working Group phase:

1. New gTLD Subsequent Procedures
2. Review of all Rights Protection Mechanisms in all gTLDs
3. Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data Expedited Policy Development Process Team

Those PDPs of utmost importance for GNSO and their success are critical for the GNSO legitimacy as new gTLD policy custodian and manager. The GNSO leadership team with council liaisons to WGs will follow and monitor those PDPs closely in order to support and work with the Working Group leadership and ensure they stick to the agreed timelines and solve issues when they arise or better prevent them.

The EPDP will be definitely a case study for new approaches and improvements for PDP and its

success is critical. The EPDP team, as mandated by GNSO, also has to come up with a data access model that balances the various concerns and interests. The council and working group leadership have a crucial role to ensure that phase is reached with the delivery of the first final report. As I am the GNSO council liaison to the EPDP, I am already involved directly on that front.

The workload and list of activities may change in coming months depending on new priorities as we experienced it with the EPDP. For that reason, the GNSO council must be ready to adapt and adjust in a timely manner. As several activities reached closing or in the final stages, we have the opportunity to re-prioritize and allocate resources to other outstanding activities.

One challenge remains which is the inclusion of GAC in PDP at an early stage and avoiding GAC communiques and advice contradicting PDP WGs recommendations. The leadership team with the involvement of council liaison to GAC will continue the collaboration with GAC leadership to remedy to this situation. While cooperating with GAC, it is also critical for us to defend the GNSO role and its primacy in gTLD policymaking.

The GNSO Council has also to monitor more closely the implementation phase with the different IRT and also prepare for incoming policy reviews where the effectiveness of policies will be assessed and evaluated. This has to factor on the community overall workload and cannot be neglected as we are trying to demonstrate the effectiveness of PDP recommendations and to develop fact-based policies.

In Closing

If elected as chair, I aim to work closely with the GNSO council to set our roadmap and goals for our common term and set the expectations from the broader community. I aim to do that in a collaborative and collegial manner while focusing on effectiveness and responsiveness. I acknowledge the challenges ahead and the changing context for the GNSO and the GNSO Council. I aim to explore how we can cope with that and fulfill our roles while remaining accountable, transparent and responsible. I believe that the council is doing its job but we got to continue the improvement effort and strengthen our legitimacy as the primary space for gTLD policymaking.

Finally, I will be really honored if I am elected as GNSO Chair and having the trust of broader GNSO community and council and I pledge to do my best to fulfill my role and commit fully for it. I do believe that you will keep me faithful to my words and promises.