Cross-Community Working Group on Use of Country/Territory Names as TLDs TRANSCRIPT
Monday, 27 July 2015 at 20:00 UTC

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http://audio.icann.org/gnso/gnso-ctn-27jul15-en.mp3
On page: http://gnso.icann.org/en/group-activities/calendar#jul

Attendees:

ccNSO:
Annebeth Lange, .no
Jordi Iparraguirre, ccNSO Council NomCom appointee
Paul Szyndler, .au (Co-Chair)
Mirjana Tasic, .rs
Grigori Saghyan, .am
Laura Hutchison, .uk
Mary Uduma, .ng
Sanna Sahlman, .fi
Jacqueline Morris, .tt

GNSO
Heather Forrest, IPC (Co-Chair)
Carlos Raul Guttierez, NPOC (co-Chair)
Susan Payne, NTAG
Maxim Alzoba, NTAG
Colin O'Brien, IPC

At-Large:
Cheryl Langdon-Orr

GAC:
Olga Cavalli, Argentina

ISO:
Jaap Akkerhuis

Other:
Nigel Cassimire

Apologies:
Joke Braeken, .eu
Ron Sherwood, .vi

ICANN staff:
Bart Boswinkel
Lars Hoffman
Terri Agnew

Terri Agnew: Good morning, good afternoon and good evening. This is the CWG on Country and Territory Names as TLD's on the 27th of July 2015. On the call today we have Ron Sherwood, Carlos Raul Guttierez, Grigori Saghyan, Heather Forrest, Maxim Alzoba, Annebeth Lange, Nigel Cassimire, Mirjana Tasic, Jaap Akkerhuis, Mary Uduma, Jordi Iparraguirre, Paul Szyndler, Susan Payne, Sanna Sahlman, and Olga Cavalli.

Joining us a little later, in a few moments, will be Cheryl Langdon-Orr. We have apologies from Joke Braeken. From staff we have Bart Boswinkle, Lars Hoffmann and myself Terri Agnew. I would like to remind all participants to please state your name before speaking for transcription purposes.

Thank you very much and back over to you (Paul).

Paul Szyndler: Thank you very much Terri. I know before we get underway that Cheryl will join us shortly and that Olga, in the chat room, has asked to be dialed out so I don't know -- I know (live) is not speaking at the moment but if you can hear or someone can take some action there it would be nice to get Olga on board as soon as possible. But we will start nonetheless. So, thank you everyone for the sake of complying with Terri's request. My name is Paul Szyndler and I'm one of the co-chairs of this working group from the ccNSO side of things. We have all of my co-chairs on the call as well and hopefully they will be able to chime in as we head through our discussions.

(Lyles) kindly sent around an agenda within the last 24 hours and it's represented up there for those of you that are in the Adobe room and you can see our intentions for today's call. Just one point that I forgot, I just want you to double check, was there anyone on the phone line that was not captured in

Adobe or by Terri's introduction just for the sake of completeness before we get underway?

Excellent, I don't think -- thank you Terri and welcome (Colin) so their participation is noted and the apologies are also noted. For today's call we wanted to kick off with a little bit of a summary of where we had gotten to at Buenos Aires for those of you that weren't present and for those of you that were but who's memory might be a little rusty in the time that has passed as to where the group had gotten to and then move onto a more substantial discussion on two letter codes which many of you will recall we did have a significant session on in Buenos Aires with the aim that that takes up the majority of our time today and as co-chairs we'd be looking to put forward a proposed position that we take with relation to two-letter codes and not close off the discussion as much as this may be a draft position of the group and then we move onto the substantial and quite possibly challenging discussion of three letter codes and then we'll finish off with the plans for where we go from here.

In regards to the first agenda item, those of you in BA will recall that the group, I believe, on about the 23rd of June last circulated documents for our face-to-face session and that was an options paper for where we could go or could possibly go on two-letter codes and also a draft progress report.

Those documents, largely speaking, are still current and appropriate and anyone on the list can have a look if they (dig back to) of the 23rd of June. The discussion in Buenos Aires focused upon two letter codes as a first issue that we would first (cab off the rink) so to speak that the group would look at and we bounced around a number of ideas not based on ideas off the top of our head but on a survey that had been circulated to members in which we received a fairly substantial response on, and again, that's being shared with members of this group and a number of views were exchanged and we discussed back and forth with no particular expectation of reaching consensus or an agreement but it was still a useful conversation nonetheless.

So for those of you that may not have been there, that was out focusing Buenos Aires. The other thing that we did was there was some engagement with the GAC and then this is ongoing and it's great to have Olga on the call and (unintelligible) the Adobe room to reflect this but, Annebeth, if your phone lines working or you're able to contribute now. You were actually the one that spoke to GAC members while we were there in BA, could you chip in on this agenda item?

Annebeth: Yeah, sure. This is Annebeth speaking on the phone. My neck is not very good today. Yes, Olga Cavalli gave me the opportunity to say some words about the work in the working group in the GAC session about geographical name and the cooperation with the GAC is very important, of course, because they have their group wider their ours but what we really work on now is to try to take the part with content territory names in the same line so we're not ending up with two different officials and the GAC has been very forthcoming and giving us the opportunity to present the work that we have been doing so thank you for that Olga.

So I think that this gave us the opportunity to make the work in the group more obvious, more visible, for the participants in the GAC and we hope for close cooperation with the GAC in the future.

Paul Szyndler: Thank you Annebeth. I don't expect what we've just gone through was largely reporting back or a recap of what we've done over the -- what we did over the last month or so but I'll open it to the floor to see if there's any questions at the moment or comments about what we've covered so far.

Olga, you have your hand rose in the Adobe room, the floor is yours.

Olga Cavalli: Yes, can you hear me?

Paul Szyndler: Absolutely.

Olga Cavalli: Thank you, thank you for inviting me to the call. This is Olga Cavalli from Argentina from the GAC and Annebeth was so kind to get with us during our meeting in Buenos Aires. The only thing that we are facing now it's a lot of time focused in the transition. This gave us (few) time for debate in Buenos Aires but our working group and it didn't allow me to attend your session in Buenos Aires so apologies for that.

But I agree with Annebeth that we are working together in order, not to overlap, but to complement our work. As she said, we are more broad. We are working towards defining a set of best practice rules or some way of engaging the applicant and the interested parties as soon as possible in order to find a way out before the conflict is established. We believe from the experience if some geographic names could have been dealt in a different way by applicants, or by the interested countries or regions before. We may have some success stories and not conflict now. So, the difficulty we find now is how to express that in the future set of rules or new applicant (iBook) or whatever the name will be.

So, we will have our next conference call with the group this week and we hope to recap our work in spite of the fact that we have few time as we have to attend many calls for the (unintelligible) but that's more or less the point now and if there are documents that we should review from the GAC perspective or -- and I promise some review for definitions to Annebeth and I've been not able to do that but -- so my apologies again for that but it's a lack of time and attending so many calls.

So this is my comments for the moment. Thank you.

Paul Szyndler: Thank you very much Olga, it's (Paul) here again. You are certainly not alone with your distraction and pressures to be engaged elsewhere both on the transition and particularly, at the moment, accountability issues. Everybody has very limited bandwidth which I guess is one of the benefits of this working

group in as much as we can progress, we can adjust our pace as we need to given other demands. So it's certainly understood.

I'll jump across the agenda a little bit. We were recapping Buenos Aires but we are talking about engagement with GAC so it is probably appropriate to note here that the co-chairs of this group have had a discussion and we're looking to finalize a (no pending) start input to go to (Thomas Schneider) as chair of the GAC which simply just formalizes and reiterates a lot of what we've discussed and noting previous engagement and the discussions in Buenos Aires as brief as they may have been and just to formally seek a reconfirmation of GAC's participation. We acknowledge that Olga is here, however, others have limited time to participate so it's not a -- it's just a friendly reminder and a courtesy note that the GAC's important participation even if it's in a -- to sort of use the terminology of the transition process, more of an observer or a participant role where we have a few more GAC members watching it would be appreciated.

So, as a procedure, it's just something that we should note and probably useful for Olga to be aware that it would be coming in the following weeks. Just a note from -- at this stage it would likely be the chairs of the GNSO and ccNSO councils pending their agreement given that they're the two constituencies that originally convene this group that would go to Thomas just covering the issues I've outlined so nothing of concern, nothing of particular note but just an encouragement for ongoing engagement and that will be shared, obviously, when it goes with members of this group as well.

Olga, you have your hand rose again, the floor is yours.

Olga Cavalli: Yes, just to compliment your comment, this is Olga Cavalli again, I have sent several messages to the list encouraging participation. I did not succeed but this doesn't mean that we shouldn't try. I'll keep insisting, as I said before, there are many, many things going on now, a lot of calls, and also the GAC, this is -- it's a common, not relevant, to this working group but just maybe you

should know that there are several different issues that are interest of the GAC. Internal working groups like the one that I chair and there are many, there are almost ten. So there are several things related with security, with encouraging participation from less developed countries, the geographic names, the participation in (non-com), many of those things that are internal to the GAC but are keeping our colleagues very busy. So, maybe that's why they are not engaging that much but you can be sure that we are reporting. Thank you.

Paul Szyndler: Thank you Olga, it's (Paul) again, yes, that's -- sorry Olga, is that a new hand or...

Olga Cavalli: Me, no, it's an old hand, sorry.

Paul Szyndler: Oh, sorry, that's okay. The -- look, and again, part of the reason we've mentioned it on this call is a matter of procedure is just to round out the loop and obviously a note from two council chairs to the GAC shouldn't be perceived as a (unintelligible) just a friendly encouragement, so if (Thomas) passes that on to the membership then perhaps it's just another tool to back up the encouragement that Olga has already offered her colleagues. So hopefully we'll see whether something comes of that in the near future.

With that I wanted to move on to the substance, or the main part of today's call, and that was two-letter codes. The co-chairs have had a little discussion or have had a number of discussions on where the group might wish to head with this topic. As I mentioned earlier, it was the key part of our discussion in Buenos Aires which, in turn, was based on a survey that was circulated around to the membership so that we feel that we have a fairly detailed, fairly in-depth understanding of pro's, con's, used in favor of one position as to how two-letter codes should be used and otherwise.

And as such, we've been discussing amongst ourselves the possibility of moving forward on this. That is, as a working group, as opposed to the study

group that proceeded this, we are actually tasked with developing recommendations and assuming a position, essentially, and as co-chairs we'd like to consider and discuss on this call the possibility of this group heading towards that now so that we can move on to the next topic of three-letter codes which is the next one of the long shopping list that we have.

Just a reminder, as it currently stands, the allocation -- two-letter codes within the ICANN framework are reserved for country and territory names. They are derived from the ISO 3166 list, two-letter code list, and therefore an external agency, and independent agency is determining what is a country and that is defined by ISO not by ICANN.

Historically this is a long-standing tradition. It is the procedure that has been in place and ICANN has had a policy in place that is based on that standard for many years as well.

It has certain advantages and some of the pros obviously are that there's some predictability as to what is and isn't a country within the ICANN framework without putting ICANN in a position where it has to make that call itself.

The ISO list, as we've discussed previously, is also dynamic in as much as new countries are created or others seize to exist, codes can be, and have been, allocated to those new countries or otherwise retired and there's just a bunch of various statuses that a particular code can have.

Given that and keeping all of that in mind, as co-chairs our collective view was heading towards the fact that this is probably the best defined most clear area of the discussion this working group is likely to have in as much as it is based on an external standard that has certain benefits and long-standing policy which utilizes that standard and generally community and even consumer understanding of what two-letter codes mean.

That said, we felt that the onus for this to change would need to come from --
would -- the onus would have to be on anyone that would recommend or
advocate a different model, would have to be a fairly strong point of change,
they would need to advocate fairly strongly that things should change. We're
not necessarily advocating the status quo for every conversation that we
have, however, in this particular case there's the long history and the firm
understanding of how this works warrants the burden of proving change on
those that advocate it.

So, that is roughly speaking where, and I'll stop and allow my co-chairs to
contribute, where we have percolated through on this particular topic and I'd
welcome the co-chairs but also any group members to offer their preliminary
views on what I've said and roughly speaking, where we're working towards.

Heather, you have your hand raised, the floor is yours.

Heather Forrest: Good morning (Paul), good morning everyone. Thanks very much.

Woman: Hi Heather.

Heather Forrest: I would like to offer some comments based on I think what -- and
                  (unintelligible) thinks with the previous agenda item on what happened in BA.
                  I understood our discussions in BA to be headed this direction. I certainly
                  understood some of the force and effect of comments to be in line with the
                  position that (Paul) has just set out. I do want to make a very fine point,
                  however, that at least from my perspective as a GNSO co-chair, (Carlos) and
                  I in that role have discussed this, we, as individuals, agree with this approach
                  although I'd like to clarify the reasoning, however, this does need to go back
                  to the GNSO as (Paul) outlined in the beginning of the call.

                  So I don't -- I want to make that abundantly clear before I say anything else
                  that this is really an individual position at this stage on my part and it does not
                  reflect my constituency, it doesn't reflect the position of the GNSO. What I

understood, really the force and effect of comments in Buenos Aires to be would be for support for the reservation of two-letter codes on the basis of the fact that this has been undertaken by ICANN on a basis of a policy decision not to itself be embroiled in the decision of who or what is a country and fundamentally based on the adoption of an existing standard. So I personally support existing and external standard, external to ICANN, existing and already in use in other applications. So I personally support that as an outcome, this reliance on an external existing standard and the policy justification for it.

I would not support decision making on the basis of this is how we do it or this is what the public identifies as a country code as because, as I said in Buenos Aires that, in my mind, would require some sort of complex survey and it would be quite difficult to prove. But, in terms of good sound policy basis for reserving two-letter codes in respect to their use in an external standard not developed by ICANN, already in use in existing environments, I'm quite happy to support that.

I'm happy to answer any questions about what I've just said, but hopefully that was clear enough. Thanks (Paul).

Paul Szyndler: Oh, thank you Heather. As ever -- Heather has phrased what I've tried to convey a little while ago ever so eloquently in comparison to my clumsy efforts but she's absolutely right that my focus, in my introduction, was on policy and on a standard and external standard and some of the comments I made about community understanding, etc., that's more of a general observation and Heather is absolutely right, we assume that the community knows what two-letter codes mean, she's absolutely right that if we were to try to base our decision on that casual observation we lack scientific procedure or rigor to do that. So, it was just an aside that I think we're agreeing at the moment by using slightly different terms.

The only other point I wanted to add, and it's part of Heather's clarification or part of the way she's couched her comments, because the co-chairs are advocating that we adopt a position (unintelligible) on two-letter codes, that does not mean that we are closing off the debate or the discussion on the issue or that it will be assumed to be a final position of this working group.

Simply, we have reached a certain point and this is where we believe the group could lead the issue as we continue to move onto others. So, for everyone various constituencies and affiliations on this group, agreeing that this is where the group may leave the discussion and the position that will -- put forward as a draft one and subsequent progress reports does not mean that you've necessarily or collectively signed off either individually or on path for your other groups. We just need to get moving on.

Is there any other comments on the position that we proposed at this stage? Okay, well in the absence of any, and thank you for the points of agreement in the chat, the procedure from here on two-letter codes, so the staff will summarize that and there's no point in me going over it again, but it was essentially the maintenance, or the group proposing the maintenance or current arrangements based strongly on the grounds of established standards and policy based on those standards and the history thereof and as this working group progresses, that will be (captured) in our next progress report and obviously those words can be (messaged) or edited by the group later on but thank you all for your support in the agreement that we've had today, it makes it very easy to move on.

Speaking of which, the next agenda item was on planning ahead or where the group is going to go to from here and I've already touched on that a little bit. The next stage of our discussions, and we won't get into it today, is obviously three-letter codes and, again, among the co-chairs we've had a little bit of a discussion about how we would attack this issue, how we would broach this both within the group and then getting the discussion out into the broader community.

So what we need to propose is that on three-letter codes we would develop and get staffs assistance to develop a survey much along the lines of the two-letter survey that was circulated to everyone and we know there were a few members who already commented on, or have started to comment on, three-letter codes. And this survey would be developed over the coming weeks and we would then circulate that to memberships and members of this working group to once again provide their comments on it.

Also, depending on how the document develops and how the survey looks, we may then seek to distribute it more widely amongst the community but this will be done in a largely controlled fashion that is, for example, Annebeth and (I's) co-chairs from the ccNOS would solicit the views of our colleagues via the ccNOS list but it would filter back through us and similarly (Carlos) and (Heather) could do that via the GNSO and we would seek the engagement of other members of the group to ensure ALAC, GAC and others were engaged as well.

The logic behind that is two-fold. One, it controls the feedback that we receive in as much as -- it filters back through the people that have sought the comment but more importantly it has the opposite effect of getting word out about our group, we managed to solicit a far-broader range of views.

It's simply having someone responsible as being the filter just gets rid of the noise or unclear positions that might come back. It also helps promote our group as we head towards Dublin where we would seek to have a more substantial progress report which will, of course, now includes some sort of summary on two-letter codes and that might start drawing people's attention. So both for interest in this group, and awareness and hopefully with people having more bandwidth to do things once the transition and accountability have moved on a little bit, probably be a nice side effect of advertising what we're doing here and what we're trying to achieve.

So, in a nutshell it's the staff and the co-chairs to develop a survey along the lines of what you're seeing with the two-letter codes; a progress report which will, or possibly a straw-man as we've had before that would support the document so that everybody's got a good understanding, and then that would go out to all of us and if we can get it into that sort of good form out to a broader range of people with the aim that we get some feedback on it and we can all analyze that and have a very meaty discussion in Dublin on the topic and formed not only by our own views and experiences but also by the feedback that we've received.

So, at the risk of monopolizing he call, I'll turn it over to the floor. Does anyone have any comments or concerns about that being the way we plan ahead between here and Dublin?

I thank you for your support, (tick) from Cheryl and (Jacqueline's) comments as well. Action item out of this will be, and I might as well given that we're at the last part of the call, the action items from here would be for staff to start drafting up -- well, there are multiple, the first was finalizing a note that will be sent to the GAC chair about the engagement between us and the GAC and seeking ongoing participation from members there that have the time and the capacity to participate. Staff will also work on a survey that will solicit views on the possible uses of three-letter codes and how it will canvas the range of issues associated with country and territory names and three-letter codes so it will be very broad. A form of exactly what that will look like and the wording will require some work but we will do that amongst this group and that is a draft survey circulated to everyone here in advance of it going out so that we can get some comments.

Associated with that will be an update of the progress report, the working document, the running document that we have with (unintelligible) well prepared as we go.

(Unintelligible) in the coming weeks, well in advance of Dublin, with the intention that we could allow possibly up to a month, depending on how timeframes are going to solicit feedback. We will then in the lead-up to Dublin attempt to summarize those documents with that feedback and then circulate that to the members of the group so that everyone can have a read and digest that and use those resources to supplement their own positions as we come and have a more (substantial) discussion on three-letter codes in Dublin.

That's my summary of where we've gotten to today. Where there any final comments or, as we move on to Point 5, any other business or issues that anyone wishes to raise?

Thank you for your support in the chat Annebeth and to everyone who participated in this call. I'm not one who's a fan of extending calls for the sake of it particularly when it's still dark outside here in Australia.

((Crosstalk))

Paul Szyndler: So that being said I'm very happy to...

Woman: I've been so well behaved until you started to bitch about the lack of coffee in the early hour.

Paul Szyndler: Oh, I've got coffee, don't worry. Allowing that -- thank you everybody for your time. I'm very happy to wrap it up within half an hour. I'm exceedingly happy as are the co-chairs that we were able to make some progress on a very direct and efficient progress on two-letter codes and look forward to notes from us and from staff over the coming weeks as we move onto discussion of three-letter codes. So, thank you very much everyone.

END