ICANN Transcription

IDNs EPDP

Thursday, 21 April 2022 at 13:30 UTC

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DEVAN REED: Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening. Welcome to the IDNs EPDP call, taking place on Thursday, 21 April, 2022, at 13:30 UTC.

In the interest of time, there will be no roll call. Attendance will be taken by the Zoom room. If you're only on the telephone, could you please let yourselves be known now?

We have apologies from Maxim Alzoba.

All members and participants will be promoted to panelists for today's call. Members and participants, when using the chat, please select Everyone in order for everyone to see the chat. Observers will remain as an attendee and will have View Only chat access.

Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

Statements of interest must be kept up to date. If anyone has any updates to share, please raise your hand or speak up now.

If you need assistance updating your statements of interest, please e-mail the GNSO Secretariat.

All documentation and information can be found on the IDNs EPDP wiki space. Recordings will be posted on the public wiki space shortly after the end of the call.

Please remember to state your name before speaking for the transcript. As a reminder, those who take part in the ICANN multi-stakeholder process are to comply with the expected standards of behavior.

Thank you, and back over to our Chair, Donna Austin. Please begin.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Devan. And welcome, everybody, to our IDN EPDP call for today, the 21st of April.

We're going to move on to a little bit of a different topic today and we're going to get an update from Dennis Tan on the ccPDP4, which is also on IDNs and variants. As you'll probably be aware, in the Board resolution, there was a request that the two efforts more or less keep in contact with one another and try to ensure that there's consistency with the recommendations so that whatever recommendations come out from one aren't significantly different from the others. So we'll get an update from Dennis on that today. So that'll be good.

Just a couple of notices on the call that we had. For the last two weeks, I guess, we've spent a fair amount of time trying to unwrap the string similarity review and how that would work in terms of variants. On the leadership team call that we had last week following our last call, what we thought might be helpful is, because we're aware that there are different perspectives or preferences on how to treat variants in a string similarity scenario … You would have seen that Ariel has sent an e-mail to the list asking that each group and the individual representatives on this team provide an e-mail to the list that more or less articulates why you prefer—whether Level 1, 2, or 3, as articulated in the e-mail sent around by Ariel—one over the other. And we've got three questions within that that we'd like you to answer or to at least guide you're thinking on why that's you're preferred level.

And then what we want to do is please have a think about that and make your views known on the list. And then we will come back at another meeting, which I think we're hoping will be the 28th—so next week. We want to come back and try to see if we can find a path forward. What I mean by that is to try to get some consensus on the preferred level. So we want to do that next week.

So we are asking you to do a bit of work in this next week. Make your preferences known on the list and give some thought as to why that is your preferred level. And then we'll come back and discuss that on the call next week. And what I would like to do is, rather than trying to moderate a discussion, give people the opportunity to speak to their preferred level during the call and then see if we can find perhaps some commonalities in approach or thinking and see if that can lead us to a consensus position.

We do recognize that the string similarity review is pretty important in the scheme of what we're doing because, from an operational perspective, it's really challenging to bring this into the New gTLD Program and understand the impact or ramifications of one level over another. So we recognize that this is really difficult, but we also recognize that it's pretty important in the scheme of what we're doing. So we're really looking forward to your input during the week, and then we can come back and discuss next week.

And I think, if we get through the string similarity review discussion, then we have the other parts of the process we need to think about as well. And hopefully that will become a little bit easier.

So I probably spent a bit longer on that than I thought I would, but I think it's really important to get your input during the week so that we can have a focused discussion when we come back to this because we do recognize that it's a pretty important part of the puzzle that we're trying to solve here. So that is my spiel for that one.

And Ariel, I think, has also sent the request to the … I could have this wrong, Ariel … The outstanding issue we have on the [inaudible] But, anyway, that letter has gone to, I think, the generation panel leads for certain scripts to see if they can help us out with that issue as well. Sorry I'm not being very articulate. But I'm so focused on the other thing that I forgot about this one. So hopefully that makes sense. With any luck, we'll get a response back from them so that they can give us an indication of whether they can do the work and how long it will take

And Ariel is going to try to save me here. So, ariel, go ahead, please.

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks, Donna. So the letter is in good shape thanks to both you, Donna, and Justine's reviews. So I haven't sent it out yet. I'm just wondering. We should send it to the working group first so folks have a final review. And then maybe we can give everybody a week of time and then, if there's no concerns or objections, I can work with Sarmad's team to get that sent to the chairs of those Chinese, Japanese, and Korean GPs.

So it hasn't gone out yet, but the draft is ready for review by the EPP team. And then, if we don't hear any objections or concerns, we can send this out. I hope that's okay.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks very much, Ariel. And sorry for confusing everyone on that. I was getting mixed up with the letter that we spoke about last week, which is on trying to understand the demand for variants from new gTLD applicants from 2012. Okay, so now that's clear as mud.

We will move on to the ccPDP4 update, and that will be from Dennis Tan. So with that, Dennis, I will hand it over to you.

DENNIS TAN: Thank you, Donna. Hello, everyone. So I'm going to give you an update on the ccPDP4 as to where we stand. [Let me see if] Anil

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is there. No, he's not there. But I see a few of my colleagues in this group also overlap with the ccPDP4. So keep my honest here.

So just by way of background for those who are not familiar with the effort and the objective of the ccPDP4, it was a launch by the ccNSO back in January 2020. The main objectives or goals or areas of focus were to basically evolve the fast-track process by which IDN ccTLD strings are evaluated and processed to be delegated as ccTLD strings. The two main areas of focus were the selection of IDN ccTLDs, management of IDN variants, which is the intersection between our two groups, and also, as of recently, they are also incorporating looking at the review process for string similarity.

As you may or may not know, the fast-track process has a slightly different way to handle string similarity. One of those items is that they have this extended process. Just reading off my screen here to get the name right, it's called the Extended Process Similarity Review Panel. And that's a second tier of a string similarity review process, if you will. It's outside the normal process. And it has been used a few times, but the working group is looking at that.

But today's update I'm going to give you is going to focus on variant management and the areas where we overlap. So in that sense, there are three items that I was asked to give an update on: mainly things that we are discussing as well in this IDN EPDP. But the conclusions or the direction that the ccPDP4 Working Group is going may not be as identical, right? We are similar, but not identical. So I'm just bringing awareness to this group. And if there are any concerns or questions, I'm happy to take those back to the ccPDP4 Working Group and discuss.

So the first one is to use the adoption of the root zone label generation rulesets as the authoritative source to validate ccTLD strings and its variant labels (allocatable and blocked variant labels). And here I want to … Because of ccTLD strings, they have an overarching … And I want you to think of it as tiers of requirement. So Tier 1 I'm going to call the overarching requirements for ccTLD strings … And this applies for in IDNs, of course. ASCII is the two-letter ISO3166 standard that really determines what are the available two-ASCII-characters. For IDNs, they have basically two requirements or overarching requirements.

So, one, the string has to be a meaningful representation of the name of the country or territory. That does not mean that it has to be a correct spelling. It basically says "meaningful representation of the string." The second overarching requirement is that the string must be in the designated language from that country or territory. The policy does not dictate which ones are the designated languages. That's something that has to come from the country or territory, the corresponding [competent] authority to designate the official languages or acceptable language for that country or territory. But the policy adopts that. Again, the IDN ccTLD string must be a meaningful representation of the country's name or territory and also has to be in a designated language.

So those are the overarching requirements. So that is what I'm calling Tier 1.

And then you have, here, two requirements. And that's where the string must pass IDNA, the corresponding RFCs, the Stability Panel, etc. And the root zone LGR serves as a proxy to validate

[whether] the string passes the IDNA 2008 standard and also addresses certain security and stability concerns. So that's where root zone LGRs sit: underneath the overarching requirements for IDN ccTLD string as a way to validate, again, that the string is conforming to RFC standards for DNS labels and also passes certain security and stability concerns which the root zone LGR incorporates by way of limiting the repertoire that can be used for labels by implementing/adopting certain rules that apply at the codepoint level or whole-label rules as well.

So, in that sense, unlike gTLD strings, we don't have that requirement of meaningful representation of something. I'm not going as far as brand TLDs or geo, perhaps. So let's say, in general, gTLDs don't have the requirement of meaningful representation or designated language. So when a ccTLD string applies for a string/TLD label, and variants are going to be calculated, the conversation is, are those variants/labels subject to those same rules of meaningful representation and designated language? And the leading thought is, yes, the variant labels also need to conform to the meaningful representation and the designated language requirements. I don't believe we have come to a consensus or called for consensus on that requirement, but I think that's the direction where the working group is going.

So, in that way, in that sense, again, with gTLDs, we don't have that, except for perhaps the conversation we had a few weeks ago about these types of restrictive TLDs—brand, geos, community-based TLDs—and how the root zone LGR and the other rules apply to variant labels.

So that's the first topic: the use of root zone LGR and how the rules apply to variant labels as well.

So I want to pause here and see if there are any questions, comments, or observations.

Yes, Donna?

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Dennis. So from your perspective—and it may be too early to say—is there any differentiation … "Differentiation" is not the word I'm looking for …

DENNIS TAN: In terms of …

DONNA AUSTIN: The way that we've been thinking about isn't the way that the cc's are thinking about [inaudible], but will the recommendations be so different as to cause a problem in terms of what the Board has asked us to be mindful of in terms of consistency?

"Divergency" is the word. Thank you, Justine.

DENNIS TAN: I don't think so but let me just caveat that. Yeah, the Board asked us to be … I don't remember the exact words, but I don't think they are [expecting] us to be identical in policy. That's not what they intended.

In terms of the specifics on this item, I think we can look through the lens of, going back, the conversations about the geos, brands, and TLDs because that, I think, is where there are commonalities, where these restricted TLDs have tighter requirements as far as how you choose a string or how that string applies or conforms to the rules of a geo or a community-based or what-have-you. I'm not sure whether we have come to a consensus or close to consensus or at least converging to an idea of, [for] the brand, for example, if the organization/company has to have a trademark on the variant label.

I'm just speaking out loud because I don't know exactly how that works in terms of when a brand TLD applies for a string and how they need to prove they have rights over that trademark. And how is that going to work for variant TLDs that are going to be a slightly different version of the string? And so perhaps it's going to be one character that is changed or perhaps the whole string is different. So how is that going to work? And are we going to apply the same rules across the board, across the set? Or those rules only apply to canonical label and the variants. So if that's the case, where we differentiate treatment based on what is the primary label and what are the variants, that would be a divergence of how ccPDP4 is looking at it, where they're going to apply the rules to the whole set and not just one label.

So that would be [for] divergence, I guess, and would not be a consistent solution, if you will, perhaps. So I think I'm going on a wavy line here, Donna. I'm not sure if I answered your question.

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DONNA AUSTIN:	It's okay, Dennis. It's probably too early to say anyway. But I just wondered whether you had any sense at this time of whether this could be problematic. But it doesn't seem to yet.
DENNIS TAN:	Yeah.

So let me continue. So the second item is about the number of variants; whether there should be a limit or not. And I think the answer here is there should not be a limit. I think that's what the group is going for. And I think that's similar to what we are talking about, convergent to not setting an arbitrary number for allocatable variants that could be delegated to a certain registry operator or, in the ccNSO world, the ccTLD manager. And that's very straightforward.

So let me just go quickly to the third item. It's about unlikely potential changes to the root zone LGR such that they may make a delegated TLD string non-conformant to the root zone LGR. So, in that case, the ccPDP4 is leaning towards grandfathering. So, if the root zone LGR changes for some reason, all ccTLDs must be grandfathered. But there is an exception clause there: "unless the only solution" … And it has to be demonstrated. We haven't gone to the place here we say what elements you need to have in order to demonstrate, but it should stay at a high level. Unless there is a demonstrable security risk that the TLD, after the change … Sorry. Let me put my words together here. So "unless the only way to address a potential security threat is to remove" … not grandfathered, yeah. I'm not saying "remove" because that would be two steps ahead. "to not grandfather a TLD string" … Then that

may be an opening for a trigger event for the selection of that ccTLD string. But, again, it raises up to a demonstrated threat and that the only solution is to remove or deselect that TLD string.

So the intention is to set a high bar in both the substantiation of the threat and also the substantiation of the selection of the string. But, again, the conversation has not gone to the details as to what could be that kind of [threat] to security and stability. We have not measured that. But the recommendation is to grandfather, unless there's a security and stability threat. That's basically it.

And I think, in that sense, we are kind of consistent, I believe, if my recollection is correct, in terms of when we have talked about in this group (the IDN PDP): potential changes to the root zone LGR that might make a delegated TLD string not conforming to the newest version. What do we do with that? We are leaning towards grandfathering but also asking the corresponding generation panels and the integration panels in ICANN to have a conversation around potential solutions of how to operate those types of issues. In that sense, I think we are consistent, but that's my take.

So I just want to pause here and see if there are any reactions or additional thoughts.

DONNA AUSTIN: Dennis, just on the grandfathering piece, we had quite a bit of conversation about the exceptions in terms of … The grandfathering is to be the default, but there are potential exceptions where that may not the case. And one was the IDNA

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2008. And there was one other reason that we thought might lead to exceptional circumstances. I guess you're conveying information now to us about what's going on with the cc's, but are you also conveying what's happening here back with the cc's?

DENNIS TAN: Yes, occasionally. Not on a regular basis. I think my sense … At least my other ccNSO colleagues here might jump in. I think my sense is that they don't find those … How do I want to put it? I'm drawing a blank here.

DONNA AUSTIN: It's okay.

DENNIS TAN: The conversation was very fluid and was there was not additional input or, I guess, [we did not] desire to go into a deeper type of conversation.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. No problem.

DENNIS TAN: And that's it. I think those were the three items that I was asked to give an update on. I'm happy to expand on it if there are any specific other things on the table. I will say this. The ccNSO, because of the bylaws—and I'm not from the ccNSO, so I'm speaking from what I'm hearing, which is, I guess, second-hand

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information; those that are more intimate with the ccNSO bylaws, please chime in—policymaking really strives to not dictate or prescribe how ccTLD operators manage their second-level registrations. So, in that sense, certain recommendations that come out of the staff paper—and the same staff paper that we are reviewing—that talks about second-level registrations … And some members from the ccPDP4 are very strong in the sense that policies should not look at or not even discuss second-level registration because that's up to the ccTLD operator to do.

The Variant Management Subgroup is looking at it from a technical angle, if you will. So we plan to discuss the aspects of the impacts of second-level registrations when you put variant TLDs on top of this context and how second-level registrations are going to be impacted and what are the considerations that the ccNSO might want to explore and how those considerations may challenge some of the ccNSO policies, if you will, in terms of how you really delineate minimum requirements for security and stability. And so, in a practical manner, the recommendations we are talking about are the harmonization of IDN tables for variant TLDs and the use of IDN tables. That's actually one of the items that is currently being discussed in the working group.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Thanks, Dennis. So there certainly are some nuanced differences between ccTLDs and gTLDs, particularly as it relates to policy development within ICANN, because cc's are sovereign. So it's the responsibility of the national, I suppose, Internet community rather than the international one. So there's always a bit of a rub. But I think, on something like IDNs, to the extent that

we can have some consistency, it's probably beneficial across the board. But I appreciate that that may be a challenge for us. But we'll do our best.

DENNIS TAN: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, case in point: IDNA 2008 has been around for many, many years. We know some ccTLD managers don't strictly to comply to IDNA 2008. And that's the reality.

DONNA AUSTIN: Right.

Okay. So do we have any questions for Dennis?

I don't see any hands. Michael says, "Good summary."

Okay. So thanks, Dennis. And thanks for being in [crossbows]. It's important from, I guess, their side and also from our side. So I appreciate that you're doing double-duty to some extent.

Okay. So now we're going to move on to reserved names. And this is going to be done by Steve or Ariel?

STEVE CHAN: This will be by Steve.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Reserved names, brought to us by Steve.

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STEVE CHAN: Thank you for the introduction. I'm the Steve Broadcasting Network, now in Los Angeles. All right. So usually you get these updates from Ariel, but you'll be getting some from me instead.

Reserved names. So what we're going to do is obviously take a look at the charter question before we get into the context, but once we go through the charter question, we'll look a little bit at what the reserved name situation looked like in 2012. Then we'll look at what has changed since then and is expected to be deployed for future rounds. And then we'll return to our charter question and the things that this group needs to consider.

So, with that, we're going to through the charter question. And this one is really looking at the reserved names. And I think it's an "and." And I think this might actually be a typo. And I'd appreciate if Dennis might weigh in the chat, perhaps. So, it's looking at the reserved names and also "ineligible for delegation." And we'll see what that looks like on the next slide because there's actually a difference between the two things.

But, in essence, this question is about whether or not any variants of reserved names and "ineligible for delegation" should also have the same level of protections in the Applicant Guidebook. And this question is intended to be looked at also with the data and metrics collected. And so what those data and metrics would be looking at is, I think, two things. One is to make sure that the reserved names ineligible for delegation strings are all RZ-LGR-compliant but then also identifying the variants for all of these different labels. That said, we have not done this data collection quite yet. But I don't think that would stop us from also looking at this

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question right now from a principle level about what the group wants to do.

So, next slide. Like I said, we'll look at the background in the 2012 round. And you'll see a consistent theme on the next three slides. We look at the reserved names and then the strings that are ineligible for delegation separately because the treatments are a little bit different.

So, the reserved names. You'll see the complete list in the graphic to the right. So it includes things like ccNSO, ICANN, ALAC—a number of different labels. And a lot of these are about the structural community of the ICANN community. It's captured in Section 221.21 of the Applicant Guidebook. And the treatment for these reserved names is that they cannot be applied for any party.

And then the other important thing here is that they are in fact included in the string similarity review. So any applied-for labels cannot be too confusingly similar to any of the strings in this reserved names list.

And so there's a little bit of contrast with the strings that are ineligible for delegation. So this is in the same main section but a slightly different subsection. It's 221.2.3 of the Applicant Guidebook. So it's just a little bit further in the guidebook. And it is inclusive of two groupings of names: names that are being protected on behalf of the International Olympic Committee, and then another set of names that's being protected on behalf of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. The similarity here is that they cannot be applied for any party. And

then the difference here is that they were not included in the string similarity review.

And the other significant part of this is that these strings that are ineligible for review in the 2012 round were intended to be temporary protections and subject to policy development for a more permanent solution in the future. So there was a Board resolution that accepted the initiation of the New gTLD Program. I think it was that same resolution. It was a very big resolution. It also noted that these International Olympic Committee strings and also the Red Cross strings should be protected in the guidebook. And it spelled out the way they would be treated, which, as I noted, is, "cannot be applied for any party, including the Olympic Committee or Red Cross," and they would not be included in the string similarity review.

So I'm pausing just for a moment to see if that all makes sense, hopefully.

Okay. Moving to the next slide, what has happened recently in relation to these two groupings: the reserved names and also the strings ineligible for delegation? So what SubPro did is they considered the reserved names and they affirmed the list that you saw on the previous page in its entirety. And they also affirmed same treatment in that they cannot be applied for any party and that they would be included in string similarity reviews. And the only change that they made was to add PTI, which is the acronym for Public Technical Identifiers. But everything else is exactly the same—same list with one addition and the same exact treatment.

I see a hand from Edmon. Did you want to intervene now or did you want to wait for the end of this slide?

EDMON CHUNG: Both are fine.

STEVE CHAN: Both are fine?

EDMON CHUNG: Yeah.

STEVE CHAN: Well, actually, let me just get to the end of this slide, and then I'll be happy to share the intervention from you.

So the strings that are ineligible for delegation. There is quite a bit more change versus the reserved names. So as I noted on the previous slide, those protections for the Olympics and the Red Cross were temporary and subject to future policy development. And that took place in the protection of International Governmental Organizations and International Non-Governmental Organization Identifiers in All gTLDs PDP. And so that is quite a mouthful and that's why there's a couple acronyms in there: IGO and INGO. So that was the PDP that was charged with determining what the permanent solution for those protections captured in the 2012 Applicant Guidebook should be in the future.

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And so what the recommendations there did was to provide preventative protections, meaning parties could not apply for these strings, which is in contrast to curative protections, which is more about, once something is already registered or delegated, providing the party with rights to be able to challenge the delegation or domain registration. So preventative protections were developed, and it was for a finite and specific list of terms. It's at the top level. And all of these outcomes from the IGO and INGO PDP were based on internationally recognized treaties and the rights conveyed in those treaties.

So the four groupings now. So you'll recall that, on the previous slide, it was just for the Olympics and the Red Cross. Now the IGOs and INGOs are also included in this list, and all received protections at the top level. And so the specifics that are included here are the terms Red Cross, Red Crescent, Red Lion and Sun, and then also Red Crystal. And these were protected in the UN six languages. And hopefully I can remember off the top of my head. It's English, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, and French, I think. I think those are the six. And so it's those terms in the UN six languages.

And for the Olympics, it's Olympic and Olympiad, in the UN six again, but also with additions of German, Greek, and Korean. For the IGOs, it says exact match and full name. And I'm going to switch for a second—sorry—to give an example of what that really means. Let's see if I picked the right one. Nope. Okay. So the full name and exact match means that … For instance, here you're looking at the Southern African development community. And what it means is the full name is this entire term, and also it needs

to be an exact match. So if a partial version of this term gets included in a different applied-for string, that would not trigger the exact match. So it needs to be the full name and exact match. And the full name is in contrast to, say, something like an acronym for any of these IGOs. So it's quite specific and it has to match the exact term. And no transposition, also.

Going back to the slide, not only is it exact match and full name, but it also allows for up to two languages beyond just the English name. And English could in fact be one of the two languages, if I recall.

And last is the international non-governmental organizations. And it's subject to the same requirements of it being the exact match and full name. So, again, no acronyms. And in this case, it's English only.

And the last thing I'll add on this slide before I go to Edmon is that, since the Applicant Guidebook for the future round has not been drafted, these names haven't been integrated anywhere. But what I showed you is the reserved names list that's referenced in Specification 5 of the registry agreement. And it protects all these terms at the second level, which is handy for us to be able to look at what will apply in the future for the top level. It's the same terms that are protected at the second level that will be protected in the future in the Applicant Guidebook. So I actually have all of the list queued up for the Red Cross, Olympics, the IGOs, and the INGOs, if we want to take a little bit more of a look in more detail at any of these terms.

With that, I will pause for a moment. I obviously see a hand from Edmon. I'm also curious if there's any other questions so far. So, Edmon, please go ahead.

EDMON CHUNG: Thank you, Steve. Thank you for the presentation. Edmon here, speaking not from the Board but personally at this point. I'm curious. In my mind, there are actually three more categories of reserved names. So I wonder how they're handled. The first one is numeric names. The second category is single and two-character ASCII strings. And the third one is single-character IDN strings. Of course, single-character IDN strings may be somewhat open in the coming round, but these three categories are also considered reserved names in the previous round. But I don't see this covered here. I wonder how it's covered.

STEVE CHAN: Thanks, Edmon. And you're testing my memory now. And it's not going well. I'll tell you that. I think we're going to have to take that one back and take a look at the exact treatment of those.

EDMON CHUNG: No problem. I don't expect [inaudible]. It seems like they have been forgotten a little bit, but they are also reserved names, from what I understand, in the last round.

STEVE CHAN: I guess I would just differentiate. So there is reserved names as a specific list, and there are strings that are ineligible for delegation as a separate list. And also, I think these things that you're talking about here are actually in a different category. And that's the part I would want to investigate to make sure that there's … There's probably specific treatment as it's laid out in the guidebook and, like I said, I'm just not recalling off the top of my head.

EDMON CHUNG: Okay. Could be. Thank you.

STEVE CHAN: But we'll definitely do some research there.

Dennis, please go ahead.

DENNIS TAN: Thank you, Steve. Clarifying question, Steve. I understand the bottom section. It talks about the IGO and INGO identifiers with respect to the consensus policies: that all gTLDs need to reserve these names at the second level. Did I hear you correctly saying that, today, the status is that they are reserved, not-available registrations minus certain exceptions at the second level but, in the future, in subsequent rounds, these names—IGO, INGO—will need to be protected at the top level as well?

STEVE CHAN:

Thanks for the question, Dennis. That's correct. So that's subject to the policy development that took place—testing my memory again—I think, back in 2013.

Just to take a wider-view lens review of this, this topic is frankly rather complicated, and there's a lot of different layers to it. There was GAC advice also available on some of these recommendations. And there ended up be an acceptance of some of the recommendations, ones that were not inconsistent with GAC advice. And there is just a ton of detail and complexity to all these things. But the areas where there was not as much complexity was at the top level, where there was agreement. And I think some of the agreement came because of these exact match and full name requirements, as opposed to acronyms, where there's a much more high likelihood of there being competing interests for a string. But for these exact match and full names, like the example I showed in the page that Ariel is sharing in the chat as well, which I appreciate, that's four words and a fair amount of characters. And the likelihood of someone else wanting that exact term is pretty low, which helped in getting agreement to allow for top-level protections.

I hope that helps, Dennis, and hopefully everyone.

DENNIS TAN:

That helps. Thank you for the clarification, Steve.

STEVE CHAN:

Sure.

All right. If there's no other questions, I'll go to the next slide. And this is where we actually talked about our charter question again. So, as a reminder, it's about whether or not, for the reserved names and also, I guess, presumably, the "ineligible for delegation"—they are two separate groupings—the variants for any of those strings should also warrant preventative protections in the Applicant Guidebook. So as I noted, it said to think of this question in conjunction with data collection, but like I said, that hasn't been done as of yet. But we can do it. But, that said, I don't think it should stop this group from being able to consider the question at a principle level.

So what you'll see here is, again, the reserved names and strings ineligible for delegation separated into two groups. And I just wanted to take one at a time because I think it's hopefully easier. So, for the reserved names, you probably didn't look at the entire list in full detail, but you may be familiar. And what you'll recall is that all of the strings in that list are all Latin script. And by definition of the Latin script RZ-LGR, there are zero allocatable variants. The exception here is that there are a handful—eleven, to be precise—test strings that were used for making sure that IDN strings being delegated to the root zone could be done in a safe and secure manner. And I don't recall the dates exactly, but those were delegated temporarily for that testing purpose and, at this stage, are no longer delegated. But they do remain reserved, and you can see the full list on an IANA page, which I do have loaded up if you want to take a look at that.

But the discussion question here is whether or not there's any need to update the reserved names list to include any possible

variant labels, which in the vast majority of cases here would be blocked variants, except for the potential test strings.

So just a short pause there. And I think it'd probably make sense to also go through the strings ineligible for delegation. But just a short pause to make sure that makes sense.

DONNA AUSTIN: Sorry, Steve. The status of the IDN test strings—they're still in use? So they are still effectively reserved?

STEVE CHAN: They are not delegated, but they're still reserved, if that makes sense. So they're not actively delegated, but they still remain actively reserved.

DONNA AUSTIN: Right. Okay.

STEVE CHAN: And thanks, Michael. And there's also an IANA page that has all the strings as well, which, if one of my colleagues … I can eventually get to it. Thank you, Ariel.

And the Applicant Guidebook at the time, for 2012, noted that there would be translations of both example and test. From our research, we're still checking. I think that only applies to these eleven test strings. I don't think that there were also example strings tested and delegated, but that's one of the things we're

going to make sure we're clear on. So stay tuned for that part. But as I said, the takeaway there is that everything with the exception of these test strings is in Latin script.

All right. For the strings that are ineligible for delegation—

JUSTINE CHEW: Hang on. Sorry, Steve. I have a question. I had my hand up.

STEVE CHAN: Sorry, Justine. Sorry I didn't see that.

JUSTINE CHEW: Can you give us any insight into whether there's any reason to make those eleven IDN test strings available?

STEVE CHAN: Thank for the question, Justine. I don't think that's the question for this group—to make those test strings available. I think the question for this group is more about whether or not, for the strings on the reserved names, any possible variants of those reserved strings should also be protected. It's not necessarily about freeing up any of the strings on the reserved names list. What SubPro did is affirm the entire reserved names list plus one additional term.

JUSTINE CHEW: Okay, right. So the way the bullet says it is sort of making me confused, I guess. So the real question is whether there's a need to update the list of reserved names that you presented in the earlier slide in terms of variant labels.

STEVE CHAN: That's correct.

JUSTINE CHEW: Okay. Thank you.

STEVE CHAN: So the two questions are about adding things, not taking away.

JUSTINE CHEW: Right. Thanks for the clarification. Thank you.

STEVE CHAN: That's a great question. Thanks, Justine.

All right. So the strings that are ineligible for delegation. Just touching on things mentioned in the previous slide, which I think are pretty important, the terms that are protected are preventative protections on the top level. And they're agreed through a PDP process. The relevant and "non-conflicting with GAC advice" recommendations were approved by the Board. And the other important parts are that this is for a fixed and finite list of names. And they're all outcomes that are reached out because these

names are based on internationally recognized treaties, like the Geneva Convention, which I think applies to the Red Cross, and then Article 6ter of the Paris Convention, which is relevant to the IGOs, for instance.

And so I provided all that context about the background of how that list was derived and the rationale for why they're getting something, which is very rare: preventative protections at a top level. Those are important things to keep in mind as you consider whether or not those protections get expanded to also include variants. So the discussion questions here are whether or not adding in preventative measures for the variants would be considered circumventing the careful work of the IGOs PDP. Would it be potentially extending the rights for those organizations beyond those that are expressly identified in relevant treaties?

And just to wrap all that up, is extending protections for variants beyond the scope of this PDP or would that rather be done by a group that is dedicated to IGOs in the future, perhaps? There is no active IGO PDP right now. That would be looking at the things I just mentioned: the basis for why these organizations potentially deserve preventative rights. So it's to be able to take that work in a careful and measured way. So that's the principle question.

With that, those are the end of the slides, I believe. And I'll open the queue. And I already see Michael in the queue. And, actually, Donna, I don't want to take the queue back or you want me to run the queue.

DONNA AUSTIN:	Let me take the queue back. And if we need your expertise, Steve, we'll have you there. But thanks very much for the presentation. That's another tricky puzzle for us to solve.
	Michael, go ahead.
MICHAEL BAULAND:	I'm just wondering. You say here that all strings are in Latin script and have zero allocatable variants. Are you sure about that? Because I just checked the list. For example, this Turkish name, which I just posted, has got a dotless "I" within it. And if I'm not mistaken, the Latin script made the dotless "I" a variant of the ASCII "I" which is an allocatable variant. Thanks.
STEVE CHAN:	Michael, I assume that question is for me.
DONNA AUSTIN:	Yeah.
STEVE CHAN:	Can you help me understand where you got that string from? I guess what I would say is that reserved names is specific to this list right here. And that looks like it might be something else, like maybe from the IGO list or INGO list.
MICHAEL BAULAND:	Sorry. Ariel pointed to a link of the entire list of a reserved names.

STEVE CHAN: Got it. So the name that you are referencing I believe then is probably an IGO, in which case that would be this bottom section here: that strings are ineligible for delegation. The reserved names is just this block of however many. That includes AFNIC, ccNSO, LACNIC, WHOIS, etc. And PTI. So the statement about there not being any allocatable variants would not apply to the IGO list. There would be in fact be allocatable variants, as you just demonstrated.

MICHAEL BAULAND: Okay. It was from the Red Cross and Red Crescent list.

STEVE CHAN: Correct—IGOs, to be specific, I think. And I will just repeat that this topic is complicated on many levels. So I appreciate and understand any questions folks have. Hopefully I answered your question, Michael.

MICHAEL BAULAND: Yes.

STEVE CHAN: And I was going to say Dennis next, but I'm supposed to be running the queue.

DONNA AUSTIN:	Go ahead, Steve. Don't worry about it.

STEVE CHAN:	Dennis, please?

DENNIS TAN:	Thank you, Steve. I think part of the confusion is the way we are using the "reserved" term interchangeably between TLDs that are prohibited for application, and, also, we use "reserved names" under the registry agreement. And that pertains to second-level labels that cannot be offered for registration. So I think we need to find a way to distinguish the two perhaps because I think it's Spec 5 or Spec 6 that talks reserved names. And they use that for second-level registrations that are prohibited from registration. So I just wanted to put it out there so that we don't confuse things: top level, second level, and what are going to be the impacts here for this group.

STEVE CHAN:	Thanks, Dennis. That's a great point. And we can make sure that we specify and update these slides even to make sure that they reference the top level.
	So, going back to the questions here, as I noted, I suggested that this can be a question about principles: whether or not the variants of any top-level—okay, [Ariel] is trying to take what Dennis said into account—reserved names and top-level strings that are ineligible for delegation should also be protected.

So is there any thoughts on whether or not they should also be protected, taking into account the elements about the Latin script reserved names and there being zero allocatable and then also all the, I guess, circumstances surrounding the IGOs, Red Cross, and Olympic names; whether or not the variants of those labels should also receive preventative protections?

DONNA AUSTIN: Steve, sorry. Would it be better to separate this conversation to reserved names? Let's have a conversation around that. And then we'll do the strings ineligible for delegation just so we're not confusing the two. Let's just talk about reserved names for a minute because if they have zero allocatable variants, then what strikes me is how do you update the reserved names to include possible variant labels? Maybe I'm missing something here, but let's just have the conversation about reserved names, and then we'll go to strings ineligible for delegation, if that makes sense.

STEVE CHAN: Those are wise words from the chair.

DONNA AUSTIN: I'm very confused, too.

Okay, so do we have thoughts, folks, on the reserved names and the discussion question that Steve has here?

Michael, go ahead.

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MICHAEL BAULAND: Thanks. I think that, for the reserved names, we should definitely auto-block all the variants after all the reserved names are also checked for string similarity. And I think that variants are a stricter version of the string similarity restrictions. Like when we in the Latin General Panel looked at characters and decided whether they should be considered variants or not, we put a stricter rule for the variants. And if we weren't so sure, we always said that this could be a note for string similarity review. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Michael.

Any thoughts from others?

Justine?

JUSTINE CHEW: Thanks, Donna. Just sharing a thought in my mind. And in furtherance to what Michael suggested, it seems to me that all the strings in the reserved names list are, for want of a better word, in English or Latin script. So if the Latin script does not have allocatable variants, then what would be the consequence of what Michael suggested? So I'm just trying to reconcile the two because that doesn't quite make sense to me yet. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: If I understood Michael correctly, I think what he's suggesting is that the variants might come into play for string similarity. So Michael is saying there are also blocked variants. So I guess that

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comes back to our discussion about string similarity at Level 1, 2, or 3—about whether string similarity should include blocked variants as well.

Michael, go ahead.

MICHAEL BAULAND: Just to quickly respond on why there are zero allocatable variants, there's still the possibility of blocked variants, and I think those most likely would anyhow have been covered by the string similarity check. But I suggest to also include them directly as a clear definable set of labels that should be reserved with the originally reserved names. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Michael. I don't know if Sarmad is on the call, but do we know, with the list of reserved names that we have, which at face value doesn't look very big, if there has been a calculation of the variants or any work done to understand what the possible variants of those reserved names are? Are we talking about a big number or a small number?

Go ahead, Pitinan.

PITINAN KOOARMORNPATANA: Thank you, Donna. As Steve shared, we haven't run a calculation for this, but for the Latin script, there is no allocatable variant, as Steve shared. But if it's needed to run the block as well, we can certainly do it. Just to note, because of

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the length of the full name, it's likely to generate quite a number of blocked variants, in the thousands or tens of thousands. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: That's for reserved names, not the strings ineligible for delegation. I just want to be sure that that's what we're talking about here.

PITINAN KOOARMORNPATANA: Yes. Just let me in quickly. Usually, if the level has a few vowels, especially "O," "A," and, "I," and if it's about five or six characters, it can generate quite a number of blocked variants. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Thanks, Pitinan.

Edmon?

EDMON CHUNG: So root servers probably generate quite a bit of [inaudible].

DONNA AUSTIN: Right.

EDMON CHUNG: So I don't have a strong opinion on this and also the strings ineligible for delegation, but I think, as we think about this, the

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number of reserved names and the number of blocked names shouldn't be the only criteria we think about. I mean, if they're blocked—and honestly nobody would ever want that unless they really actually want the reserved name or the string ineligible for delegation—then that's not hurting any of the market trying to pick up new gTLD strings.

And on the other hand, I want to raise the issue that I raised before: the concept of atomicity of the variants. So if we weigh the two, if we can preserve the atomicity better, without hurting the actual things for the gTLD market, so to speak, then we should probably lean towards a more conservative approach. That would be what is in my mind right now.

But, again, at the end of the day, I don't really have a very strong opinion on this, but I think, as we think about this, these are some of the things that we should think through as well.

DONNA AUSTIN: Yeah. Thanks, Edmon. And I think, to your point, we're doing this potentially for forever. So we're not just doing this just for the next round but it's subsequent rounds and whatever comes of that in the years/decades to come. There may be other reserved names that end up being added to this list, and the variants of those could become more important.

So I take your point. Let's just not do the number crunch here but let's understand that potentially we're developing policy that's going to stand for a very long time. So, in order to preserve the reserved names—and we don't know what the future holds—it

wouldn't hurt to be conservative until such time as things can be proven otherwise. And perhaps another PDP can decide to loosen the reins a little bit. So it's a point well made, Edmon.

Can we go back to the questions, Steve? So I don't know how others feels. We've heard from Michael. I think he's leanings towards that the reserved names should include possible variant labels. And I think what we're hearing from Edmon is the same. But do other folks have a thought on this?

I'm not seeing—Steve?

STEVE CHAN: Thanks, Donna. I was just raising to see if anyone wants to raise their hand. I didn't want to jump in front of anyone. But just an observation from the staff side is that I think what I might be seeing or I guess what we might be seeing here is we're exhausting the limits of our ability to have this conversation on a principle level and I think we need to have some real examples and data available to make a more informed decision. So if in fact it is going to be very, very large number of blocked variants [inaudible] the increase in security and stability [inaudible] the conservative approach [worth] the complexity it might add to operational implementation? And we can't really do that without having data in front of us.

DONNA AUSTIN: Agreed. The data is important and it has been our friend throughout this PDP. So to the extent that it's possible to get that data, I think that's terrific. That would help the conversation.

And I see that there's folks that support the collection of data. So if we can get that done, that would be helpful. And I don't know how long it would take to do that, so it may be a little while before we can come back to this question.

So I guess we can set aside reserved names for now, but if we move on to strings ineligible for delegation, I have to say where the terminology becomes important. So reserved names have a certain status. Obviously, when the IGO/INGO PDP was done, there must have been conversation about whether these strings were to be reserved or whether …They had obviously come with a different classification, I suppose, which is "string ineligible for delegation." So I think the conversation is a little bit different to the reserved names because, certainly for me, reserved names are—I hate to say this—of a higher status level than perhaps "string ineligible for delegation." So maybe we can try to have this part of the conversation with that in my mind as context.

Steve, go ahead.

STEVE CHAN: Thanks, Donna. That is a very, very good point. And I forgot to mention this when I was discussing this. So the treatment as proposed by the IGO and INGO PDP was that these strings would be, as you just said, ineligible for delegation, which meant that they could not be applied for any other party. There's actually an exception procedure for the relevant organization to apply for their own string. So that is a little bit of difference from the 2012 round where no party could apply for them. There is now an exception procedure.

But the other thing important thing that I think you just called out is that these strings that are ineligible for delegation would not be included, just as they were in 2012, in the string similarity review process. So it's preventative protections for the precise terms that are on the list, and it's only preventing the registration of those specific terms. So thanks for making that point, Donna. It's an important one.

DONNA AUSTIN: [All right]. Thanks, Steve.

So, in that context, do folks have any thoughts on whether the strings ineligible for delegation should also include any possible variants? And I expect that … [I'm seeing] a little bit of the list is shown by Steve and Ariel [inaudible] I think, with the list in chat. It's a big list. And the names themselves have a lot of characters within it, so I expect that the variant labels would be significant. So, not to undo the principle statement that Edmon spoke to earlier, I think this is a little bit of a different situation because these are strings ineligible for delegation rather than reserved names.

So any thoughts on this one? And also bear in mind the questions for discussion that Steve has identified here about being careful not to circumvent the work of the IGO PDP or extending the rights beyond those expressly identified in the relevant treaties, which was a pretty important consideration in the PDP itself. So any thoughts on this question, even to the extent that folks agree that a string ineligible for delegation is different from reserved names

and therefore we can have a different conversation or a different approach to the two?

I don't see any hands. So Dennis is saying it make sense. I'm not sure which part, Dennis. But if you're willing to …

DENNIS TAN: Sure. Yeah, I'm agreeing with you on the last part. If they're making the distinction between those reserved names and "ineligible for delegation," that allows us to also consider different treatments if we decide to.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Thanks, Dennis.

DENNIS TAN: And the reason for that is the considerations about extending rights. So if the result of those working groups' deliberations/policies are to give rights to certain strings' exact match, I don't think we are in a position to extend those rights. So, again, I think we're not ready to go through the full process, but I think, in my mind, we should be mindful of that principle. That's all. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Dennis.

Okay. And I see, in chat, there's a note from Michael. The number of variants is of no concern in his opinion. "If we say all variants

are blocked, you just run the LGR tool to check if there is a variant relation. The LGR tool doesn't care whether the number of variants is 2 or 20,000." Okay. So noted.

So, Steve, did we have anything else on this? I see we're getting close to time. I'm not seeing any hands.

STEVE CHAN: I believe this is the last slide. Yeah, that was.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay.

So, Hadia, I see your note in chat. "What are the elements based on which we should make our principle determination?" Did you want to expand a little bit on that?

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Okay. Thank you, Donna. It's just I'm trying to think of the question and the answer, and I'm not sure what to consider and what not to consider, and what needs to be considered. And that's why I'm struggling to come up with an answer.

DONNA AUSTIN: So I think that a reserved name … I think we've had a conversation, to Edmon's point, about the principle of atomicity and whether that's important or not. So the variants for the reserved names could be important down the track. It's unlikely that they would be potentially strings that people wanted to apply

for. So there's probably not [inaudible] there. But I think we're having a conversation which was based somewhat on a numbers again. How big is the problem? But that's not the only consideration we need to think about here.

So I think there's a few elements that we can think about, but I think it's important, in the context of this question, that we do draw a distinction between what is a reserved name and what is a string ineligible for delegation, particularly with the IGO/INGO issue, understanding that there were a lot of sensitivities around that?

So it's a little bit hard for me to unpack the elements because I think they're different in both, but I guess what we're trying to do is understand with this conversation what it is we're talking about and the problem we're trying to solve. And then we can go away and think about things and maybe review the conversation today and the presentation from Steve. And, when we come back to this again, we might be in a better place to have a bit more discussion and come to an agreement.

And I know that Justine is putting in, "In other words, why would we treat to reserved names differently than strings ineligible for delegation in terms of variant labels?" Justine, I don't know if you want to talk to that.

And, Steve, I see your hand is up. Go ahead.

STEVE CHAN: Thanks, Donna. As I was reading Hadia's question in here and your response, it made me think that we could potentially look at specifically the ineligible-for-delegation strings through a different

lens. And what I mean by that is, given the sensitivities that were involved in getting to this finite and fixed list of names, is there anyone that believes that the protections need to be extended to the variant labels? So just approach it from the standpoint of, what are the arguments for doing so, given all the sensitivities and challenges that were present in actually getting to consensus recommendations to protect those names?

So I guess maybe that's my suggestion: to just flip the question to get folks to think about, "Is there a rationale for protecting them?" and, if so, then articulate those reasons. And that could be the basis for discussion. But if members are not having a good rationale for doing it, maybe that's the answer. So, like I said, just maybe flip the question to try to find a reason to protect them. And then that can be the start of the discussion. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Steve. And perhaps there's another part to the string ineligible for delegation: what happens is an IGO actually applies for its string, and there are variants that they could potentially apply for? I don't know if that's relevant or not, but I'm just taking it a step further.

Edmon, go ahead.

EDMON CHUNG: Thank you. So, actually, in response to what Steve said and building, Donna, on what you're saying, the situation would be that, if we do not protect the variants—then let's say we relax the rules, and the IGOs are able to apply for the name—then they

would be blocked, right? Then the first-come, first-serve rule would have caused them to lose out in a way. But if the variant comes in, it would then not allow the IGO at a later round or a later stage to apply for it because then the variant will overlap and not allow it to apply for it. And I think that is something that we need to think about in terms of whether that kind of first-come, first-serve is fair because, in this process, they won't be able to apply. Maybe they want to apply but they won't be able to apply in this round. But when they are able to apply, then they can't apply because someone came in earlier because of this reserved name because we didn't reserve the variant of which. So I think that's something we might want to think about as well.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Edmon. It becomes a complicated process to sort through, isn't it?

Okay. All righty. We're a minute past. So thanks again for the discussion. And thanks to Steve for driving us through most of this today and Dennis for the update on the IDN ccPDP.

Just a reminder, folks. There's a little bit of homework that we'd like you to do in the next few days, and that is to give us an idea on the list of what your preferred level is on the string similarity issue because we would like to set up for another call on that next week.

All righty. So with that, Devan … Is there any other business that I've missed, Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks, Donna. I think we have covered it all.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay, great. All righty. Thanks, everybody. We will see you next week.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]