AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Statement of the ALAC on the
Proposed New GNSO Policy Development Process

Introduction
By the Staff of ICANN

Alan Greenberg, At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) liaison to the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO), and Dave Kissoondoyal, AFRALO ALAC representative, originally composed this statement.

A wiki workspace on the Statement of the ALAC on the Proposed New GNSO Policy Development Process was posted on 28 March 2011. On that same day, a call for comments was sent to the ALAC-Announce mailing list.

After incorporating comments received, a second version (the present document) was created on 30 March 2011.

On 31 March 2011, Olivier Crépin-Leblond, Chair of the ALAC, requested the At-Large Staff to begin a five day ALAC vote on this statement.

On 31 March 2011, the enclosed statement was submitted to the public comment for this issue, the relevant staff person, and the Board Secretary, with a note saying that the document was currently undergoing ALAC ratification.

[End of Introduction]

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Proposed New GNSO Policy Development Process

The ALAC would like to commend the Proposed Final Report of the Policy Development Process Work Team (PDP-WT) concerning the development of, and transition to, a new GNSO Policy Development Process.

Being highly supportive of the ICANN Board approved set of recommendations designed to improve the effectiveness of the GNSO, including its policy activities, structure, operations, and communications, the ALAC is pleased to have been able to contribute significantly to the proposed Final Report.

1. Streamlining of the Process

The ALAC supports the appropriate operating principles, rules and procedures applicable to a new Policy Development Process (PDP). By starting with an Issue Identification Process, Scoping and request for an Issue Report; a new mandatory Public Comment period on the Preliminary Issue Report; and a Council vote before initiation of the Policy Development Process, we are ensuring that Policy Development Processes are based on thoroughly-researched, well scoped objectives, and are run in a predictable manner that will yield results that can be implemented effectively.

2. Advisory Committee Involvement

The ALAC is pleased to see that the Draft Report recommends maintaining the three methods of beginning the PDP process that are currently enshrined in the ICANN Bylaws (Board, Advisory Committee and GNSO). Although to date, only the ALAC has requested an Issue Report leading to a PDP, it is crucial that all Advisory Committees (AC) have the ability to focus attention on gTLD policy issues that they believe are important to ICANN and its various stakeholders. Although the GNSO Council is firmly in control of whether or not to initiate a PDP, it is important that each AC can request that an issue critical to that AC receives proper focus from the GNSO.

The ALAC is also pleased to see a new appeal process to address the case of the GNSO deciding not to initiate a PDP requested by an AC. Although such a case has never occurred, it is important that all decisions in an organization such as ICANN have due process in place to address such possibilities.

3. The Working Group Model

The ALAC has pointed out that although the Working Group model is the current method of choice for ICANN policy development, this may change over time, and that we should not lock ourselves into processes if and when they prove to be less than optimal. This position was supported in the recently

adopted GNSO Working Group Guidelines when it allowed for other models to be used assuming proper procedures are established. The ALAC is pleased to see that the PDP-WT has supported this flexibility.

4. Multilingual and Multicultural Dimension

The GNSO Improvements Report, approved by the Board, identified one key objective as follows: Maximize the ability for all interested stakeholders to participate in the GNSO's Policy Development Processes. The ALAC is satisfied that this objective has been addressed in the proposed Final Report of the PDP-WT. To maximize the ability for participation, it is important that all the necessary facilities are provided.

There are 130 At-Large Structures throughout the world and they come from very diverse cultures and communities with different languages.

The ALAC is satisfied that the PDP-WT recognized the importance of translation to facilitate participation of non-English speakers in the GNSO Policy Development Process and approves the following PDP-WT recommendations:

- At a minimum the following PDP outputs should be translated in the five (5) Official UN Languages:

    o Working Group Charter (including any amendments)

    o Executive Summary of Initial, Final or any other report that is put out for public comment, including recommendations (if not included in the Executive Summary)

- Public comments should be received in other languages and where feasible, these comments should also be translated back into English.

- ICANN is encouraged to consider whether the use of volunteers to assist with translation is appropriate and practical as a cost-cutting measure while it is considering the enhancements of the translation strategy, which is part of the overall strategic plan.

The ALAC appreciates that this is a difficult and expensive process, but is pleased that ICANN is moving to equitably fulfill its global mandate.

Summary

Overall, the ALAC is aware of and appreciates the immense effort that has gone into the current draft Report. It also appreciates the fact that the recommended process is both rigorous and at the same

time sufficiently flexible to allow the PDP to meet the community's needs as they evolve, and to meet the varying requirements of as-yet unknown Policy challenges.