AL/ALAC/ST/0411/2
ORIGINAL: English
DATE: 11 April 2011
STATUS: FINAL

AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Statement of the ALAC on the
Proposed Recommendation for a Global Outreach Program

Introduction
By the Staff of ICANN

Carlton Samuels, Rapporteur of the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), originally composed this statement.

A wiki workspace on the Statement of the ALAC Statement on the Proposed Recommendation for a Global Outreach Program was posted on 29 March 2011. On that same day, a call for comments was sent to the ALAC-Announce and regional At-Large mailing lists.

After incorporating comments received, a second version (the present document) was created on 5 April 2011.

On 31 March 2011, Olivier Crépin-Leblond, Chairman of the ALAC, requested the At-Large Staff to begin a five day ALAC vote on this statement starting 5 April 2011.

On 11 April 2011, the enclosed statement was submitted to the public comment for this issue, the relevant staff person responsible for the public consultation on the Proposed Recommendation for a Global Outreach Program and the Board Secretary, with a note saying that the document was currently undergoing ALAC ratification.

[End of Introduction]

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In its recommendation for the GNSO Council's operational improvements, the Board Governance Committee (BGC) Working Group (WG) advised new rules for the Policy Development Process (PDP) specifically in context of the adoption of a working group model. The BGC was clinical with the rationale for its outlook: greater flexibility in the process enabled by "public discussion, fact-finding, and expert research in order to define properly the scope, objective and schedule for a specific policy development goal, and the development of metrics for measuring success". Coming on the heels of the London School of Economics (LSE) study which opined that GNSO "policy development activities should become more visible and transparent to a wider range of stakeholders", the BGC WG declared itself keen to see involvement of "interested stakeholders" maximized in the policy development process. It has supported more thorough and insistent communications between the GNSO Council on the one hand and its constituent parts, other SO's and AC's, in preparation for the policy development operations of working groups. This is a clear case for what we, the representatives of the At-Large would term 'in-reach'. In all of this, we have discerned only a muted concern for the travails of ordinary Internet end users. We believe it would be most useful for them to be messaged directly.

The ALAC is conscious of the truism implied: policy is developed at the centre but its impact is resoundingly felt at the edges. In our view, more education and communication from the centre regarding the policy development process in general and the more information returned to the centre on the effects of these policies as implemented on every area of the Internet ecosystem – including ordinary Internet end users - are major building blocks for the transparency framework that ICANN must operationalize if it is to be truly internationalized. We are further seized of the prospects for greater trust engendered for ICANN at the edge - where the At-Large constituents live and work - with public embrace of mechanisms instituted for greater accountability.

For these reasons, we heartily endorse the GNSO's Global Outreach program with a clarifying proviso: that the needs of ordinary Internet end users for education and information be embraced as a central theme of its development. The BGC WG advised collaboration with a like-minded SO or AC for the development of a winning outreach strategy with implementable outreach programs. The ALAC is pleased to offer the At-Large resources in this regard. To begin, we offer the summary At-Large declarations on global outreach at its Summit held at the 34th International Meeting in Mexico City for advice and guidance. [See: http://www.atlarge.icann.org/files/atlarge/correspondence-05mar09-en.pdf]. We are especially keen to draw your attention to the chapter on Global outreach contained here.

The ALAC has observed over time the zealousness with which the GNSO protects its pole position for policy-making in ICANN councils. The Board Governance Committee in its wisdom rightly recognizes inclusiveness as even more important for sustainability and legitimacy of this posture. We are unanimous that a sustained global outreach initiative would be a worthy investment for the returns that shall accrue to all parts of the global Internet community, users in ordinary included.