

## **Candidate Statement for the position of GNSO Council Chair**

**November 2010**

**Candidate name: Stéphane Van Gelder**

**Country of origin: France**

**Dear GNSO Councillors,**

It is an honour to be nominated for the position of GNSO Council Chair. Please find below my candidate statement. I am happy to answer any questions you may have at any time. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

### **The challenges ahead**

The coming year will be crucial for the GNSO Council. We are about to enter the second year under the new structure, and the challenges before us are to make the Council work as efficiently as it can while managing a (still new) bicameral system and a heavy workload.

Look no further than the current draft project list for an example of that. It has 25 open projects, the oldest of which, the Travel Drafting Team, was started more than 2 years ago. As the manager of the GNSO's policy development process, the Council has a strong responsibility to see that these projects are completed as expeditiously as possible while making the best possible use of the resources at our disposal. Staff has already warned that they are stretched to breaking point. Among Councillors, there is growing evidence of volunteer burn-out. We have tried to address this by embarking on a prioritisation exercise. But more needs to be done.

The next Council leaders team will have to address the following points.

- The Chair must be able to count on both vice Chairs to help with the everyday work of making the Council function. A strong management team is a must and all 3 members of that team must have the right balance of managerial skills, a willingness to invest the necessary time and an understanding of the issues.
- The Council leaders will need to work with everyone on Council, beyond the artificial split some would impose between both houses, to tackle the load and ensure the Council fits into its new role as defined by the restructure process.
- The Chair must maintain a neutral approach and treat all issues equally, whether brought to the fore by one house or the other.
- The Chair must be willing and able to reach out to, and include, the SG and Constituency Chairs in the Council process. The GNSO Council must not be disconnected from the groups it represents.
- Prioritisation and resource management are key issues. The Chair must have a desire to engage the Council in taking them on.

With the possible launch of the new gTLD program next year, the GNSO Council will be at the centre of this revolution. We wrote the initial recommendations that led to the program. We will remain under the spotlight of the rest of the community's expectations. The Council has the potential to help steer the rest of the community into this brave new era.

We have already implemented a 2-house structure that is focused on making everyone work towards a common goal. That is something ICANN as a whole can hope to benefit from.

### **Why am I the best person to lead the Council?**

As vice Chair for the past year, I have been able to build close working relationships with all of you. Day-in, day-out, I have seen first-hand the organisational work that goes into making the Council function. I have worked closely with the GNSO Council support Staff.

I have taken on several managerial tasks through my involvement in drafting teams or working groups and organising the GNSO Council agenda for all ICANN meetings. This has involved outreach to major ICANN groups within and beyond the GNSO. I am confident that these relationships will prove invaluable if I am elected Chair.

I was also fortunate to lead the Council as stand-in for Chuck during the Nairobi meeting. This gave me an invaluable look at the actual requirements of the Chair position. The experience I gained in Nairobi puts me in the unique position of being able to run for Chair, having already had a "dress rehearsal" for the position.

In Nairobi, I found the actual process of managing the Council's work, rather than the usual Councillor role of pushing one group's ideas, very satisfying. The required neutrality of the Chair position means focusing on one thing above all else: making sure the Council reaches its objectives, whatever those objectives are.

### **A little personal information**

I am both French and English. I have lived in both countries. I speak and write both languages. I understand the "Latin" and "English" cultures, their similarities and their differences. This is an important asset to bring to the leadership of a group as diverse as the GNSO Council.

I am the General manager of INDOM, a French registrar. We provide domain management services to large and medium size companies. Our size is small compared to this industry's major players. Because we service corporations whom themselves service millions of everyday users worldwide, we are extremely mindful of both the need to defend prior rights and to fight abuse on the Internet.

I set INDOM up along with two business partners in 1999. Today it is the French market leader for corporate domain management. To achieve that requires leadership and organisational skills. It also means weighing the aspirations and ambitions of three diverse business partners whilst staying the course set for the company.

Last year, when I became vice Chair, we reorganised the company internally to free up the required time for my GNSO Council duties. If I am elected Chair, I am committed to spending the required amount of time on those duties and to focus on them.

I was elected to the Council by the Registrars Constituency in 2008. On the Council, I am the European representative for what has since become the Registrar Stakeholder Group. I was re-elected to this position by the RrSG for a second term in October this year.

Before being so heavily involved in ICANN, I served 2 terms representing the registrars on the AFNIC (French registry) Board. I also served on the Board of the French Chapter of ISOC. These positions endeared me to the issues that are important at both registry and user level.

I have a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science, giving me the technical base required to understand the issues the GNSO faces.

Before starting INDOM, I was a print and TV journalist for 10 years. This meant staying curious about everything; interacting with people of different backgrounds; having the necessary confidence to express myself in public; talk or write in a way that remains accessible to people with different knowledge, attention and experience levels; and having a strong respect for the truth and for the facts.

I have tried to provide as comprehensive a statement as possible. I look forward to seeing you all again in Cartagena and to welcoming our new Council members there.

Kind regards,

Stéphane Van Gelder