

**ICANN  
Transcription ICANN Hyderabad  
Q&A with Candidate for 2016-2017 GNSO Chair  
Friday, 04 November 2016 at 18:00 IST**

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James Bladel: We're about ten minutes ahead schedule but are there any objections to just diving into the next item on the agenda so we can get going on that and then we can maybe wrap that up and wrap up a little early, which nobody ever says in ICANN. So the next session is Q&A with the candidate for next year's GNSO chair, that's me.

I don't know that there are any slides here. Maybe there are slides. No slides, okay. Hopefully folks have had an opportunity to read the candidate statement, and I won't burden you with that now at this late hour. But I think generally if I could just make a quick statement. You know, I don't know what my expectations were a year ago but I can tell you what they are now.

And it's this role is entirely about the work and getting the work done, and there's a ton of it. I note that we set out to do a few things differently last time. I think first and foremost, we endeavored to foster a team-based approach to the leadership of the council with Heather and Donna and myself. I hope that it's apparent as it is to me and probably to the two of them that that is very much the standard MO for the leadership is that we really don't make a lot of moves without consulting the other two. And in fact that actually got me uninvited to an event here. That's a story for drinks someday.

But I think that is probably in recognition of the workload increasingly, the complexity increasing and the fact that it's just not scaling to the point for a single person to take on, you know, by themselves. I think that we work well together as a team. I think we've just finally kind of learned how to drive this thing and such that I checked in with both Donna and Heather to get their intentions before deciding to throw my hat in again for another year because I really felt like it would have given me strong pause if either of them would have said that they weren't, you know, weren't on board for another year.

As far as the work that we've done, I think that we have made some pretty significant strides but we've got a nice long laundry list of achievements, but certainly we have a long pile of unfinished to-do items as well. The challenge - one of the challenges I think has been, and it's been pointed out I think to us over the time, is we kind of have to work within our processes to ensure that the outcomes are legitimate and recognized and respected while still being effective and not being hamstrung by our own processes. And that's a challenge sometimes, you know?

And I think you don't have to look any further than a lot of the things that were associated with the IANA transition and just all these external deadlines that were coming up on us and trying to shoehorn those into our meeting schedule and into our process and giving folks enough time to go back and consult with their stakeholder groups and constituencies. And it was a real challenge to ensure that the GNSO in particular wasn't removed from the critical path for all of those transition-related activities.

I think that's one of them. And then of course a number of the issues that are coming up with filling, as Elise pointed out, we filled two registry and one non-registry appointments to the CSC. We have a temporary appointment to the empowered community. We have slates of review teams to fill. We - that are both upcoming. We have a new incoming liaison from the GNSO to the GAC.

So there's a lot of positions that kind of have to be identified. We put out calls for volunteers and then we kind of role those back up into approvals here.

I think that we've had discussions about having a standing committee to fill that function, and I think that's probably some of the - one of the first things we'll need to tackle in the next year. But that's an example as well is trying to work within the existing policies and procedures to get the work done in a timely manner in a way that's compatible with what we're trying to do as council.

So I don't know. I don't know if that's - I don't want to rehash all of my candidate statement; it's there for you to read. Hopefully, you know, you read it on the airplane or if you were feeling like you needed something to cure some insomnia, but that's where we - that's where I stand today. And I think that we've done a fairly decent job. We've got plenty of work to do and I welcome your questions.

Heather Forrest: Thanks, James. I would like to - it's a great opportunity to cross the aisle, so to speak. I'm sorry, Donna, I was quick to jump in because I think it's just a good time to do it. I want to speak out very publicly in support of James and the way that he's conducted business in the last year.

James, I've found working with you to be an extremely collaborative experience and to the extent that there's any - I'll speak from my heart and say to the extent that there's any perception that the Non-Contracted Party House is marginalized or disenfranchised in council leadership, I'll have to say that I haven't witnessed any of that at all and found it to be a very cooperative and transparent working relationship. It's not always easy, let's say.

I've sort of struggled as to how to get all the minutia of the informal discussions that we'll have back to my house. There's lots of the things that we talk about on a purely informal basis. You know, for example, in the

hallway on the way to the GAC session we've just had now, there's lots that we don't plan in advance and yet I found that the relationship has been an extremely positive one.

So I can't say that I speak for the house because I haven't been empowered to do so nor am I empowered to speak for my stakeholder group or even my constituency on this one, I'm speaking very much from a personal capacity and saying thank you for a very collaborative year. I've found the experience to be relatively enlightening. As you say, the workload is intense. I think there's a reason there's three of us at the top of the table and I'm - yes if you wanted to take the job on by yourself without the two vice chairs, good luck to you. But yes, you have, you know, my personal support for continuation and my best wishes. Thanks.

James Bladel: Thanks, Heather. I'm just looking at the queue here. I think, Paul, you want to go first and then Keith.

Paul McGrady: Sure. Paul McGrady for the record. So James, I think that the fact that as I look around the table I see a lot of very bright, ambitious people and the fact that no one came forward thinking that they could do better than you is the best candidate statement that there is. And so I'm very happy and would like to congratulate you on what appears to be a reelection by acclaim.

James Bladel: Thanks. And this is the truth is that I am often intimidated by the talent and brainpower around the table. So that's one of the things that motivates me to keep working and stay up late just so I can keep up. Keith?

Keith Drazek: Thanks, James. Keith Drazek. So I would just like to thank all three of you for being willing to take on another year, another term as our leadership team. I think it's - I'm very grateful. I think we all are grateful that you're willing to continue doing this. Continuity I think is really important, you know, particularly as, you know, learning curves and getting up to speed and, you know, trying to figure out, as you said, you know, how to drive this thing.

So the only question I have is what more can we as the rest of the council and councilors do to support the three of you? And you don't necessarily have to answer that right now. It's probably worth noodling about a little bit, but, you know, I think that there - because of the workload I think in part associated or as a result of the distraction that we had with the IANA transition and the accountability work and everything, I feel like a lot of the work that we have before us has been sort of jammed together and it's been backed up a little bit. Not - it's not, you know, nobody's fault, it's just the reality of the amount of workload. So what can we do to help you?

James Bladel: Thanks, Keith. I can think of two things right of the cuff. The first one is that this really active council and that, you know, I can think of probably half a dozen times where we've tried to put together a quick response team to draft a letter or a statement and we put out a call for volunteers and usually we don't hear crickets. There's three or four or five people who will step up. So my first request would be more of that. It's been a very active council and I think, you know, that's been fantastic. We're very fortunate in that regard.

And the second thing is keep us honest. I, you know, Paul lives kind of rent free in the corner of my head because of some of the things he raised during the transition about look, hey are we rushing this, are we being responsive to, you know, are we bending the rules to accommodate pressures that are coming externally to us.

And I think that was during the discussion in Marrakesh and during some of our discussions in Helsinki. And I think, you know, and there's - and, you know, I think it gives you a pause and it says, well wait a second, you know, he's right. And we need to make sure we're not coloring too far outside the lines to deliver on something that we feel is causing us to bend our rules a little bit. So keep volunteering and keep keeping us honest. That would be my request. And I don't know if Donna and Heather if you had additional.

Oh yes. When we put together this standing staffing - the standing nomination committee or whatever we're going to call it, please throw your hat in the ring for that. We can't do that to them. That is mean.

Heather Forrest: No, no, so James is up for election so he doesn't want to say that because it's mean he says. Look I did try and spearhead and initiative to get the community more involved in meeting scheduling and I think we've done better as the GNSO, as the council, but I think we need to work together to try and have more of a say in terms of how staff puts together our schedule.

So whether that means we have something internal that happens to make that process more transparent, I think that would be great. And it really is one of the ugliest tasks that we have to do because it's so thankless and it's so awful and we're all going to leave this meeting and forget that this meeting happened. But nevertheless, Keith, you asked, you get.

James Bladel: Yes, the scheduling, looking under the hood or looking into the sausage factory of how the schedule was made was a real wakeup call. And yes. And the more the merrier I guess. The more folks that want to join in and take a part in that one. I just noticed I haven't been paying attention to the queue. So, Stephanie? Where's Stephanie? Oh there she is. Your card is over here, Stephanie.

Stephanie Perrin: Yes thanks. Stephanie Perrin for the record. I was just wondering what your views were because it came up yesterday in the GNSO futures meeting that we had, the whole issue of restructuring of the GNSO. It came up in Westlake, wasn't dealt with. There were many comments apparently. It came up in the GNSO futures. Was an element behind the amendment that was put in last night, in my view at least. What do you think? It's likely to come up again. How do we deal with it?

James Bladel: Yes. So you mean the bicameral structure of the GNSO?

Stephanie Perrin: Yes.

James Bladel: Is it really the bicameral structure?

Stephanie Perrin: I don't know. I'm a newbie here myself.

James Bladel: So I remember before the bicameral structure there wasn't a bicameral structure, it was something similar where contracted parties had weighted votes. Am I remembering that correctly? Mason's nodding his head. And Chuck, is that - you were at the wheel then. So yes.

What do I think about it? I think as a - obviously it's a source of discontent or dissatisfaction. And I think that is something that we need to be cognizant of and probably work towards. I do note that as contracted party, I think it is important that the contracted parties ultimately have the burden of carrying out the policies that are developed by the council. So I don't think it's necessarily a flaw that a contacted party house can essentially say no we don't agree with this policy.

Because were that not the case then it flips over and you're just a witness to your own execution is how I put it in the past. Now what does that mean as a chair? I don't know. It means it's something I have to be aware of whenever we're introducing anything that looks like it's tiptoeing close to a structural issue. I don't know that it's something that's going to come up in the next year, but it does seem to arise, you know, we noted in the discussion of the drafting team and the discussion of the GNSO reform.

I would be interested in more in understanding what the viable alternatives would be to the bicameral system that addressed the concerns that contracted parties would have about losing control of their contracts. Maybe that's where we start the discussion. And I don't know if I just, you know, went up in -- what do they say in American politics -- just went up and planted a wet kiss on the third rail of GNSO politics or whatever, but you know. It is not

an easy subject to task and I don't have a I guess, very obviously at this point, I don't have a good answer for you.

Donna, you're up next.

Donna Austin: Thanks, James. Donna Austin. So lastly just to echo what Heather said, I - obviously I think the Registry Stakeholder Group supports James for the position but personally I do so as well. It's been a good experience for the last 12 months working with James and Heather. I've certainly learned a lot. Given I've been in this environment for 15 years, it's still stunning to me that you can still learn so much within a short period of time.

So we've got some challenges ahead and I, you know, like to say I think the point that Keith made about the continuity is really important. I think probably, you know, if we look past the next 12 months, I think one of things we should start to think about probably midyear is the continuity for the - ensuring that the next leadership team isn't called out in some way.

So I think one of the challenges is is potentially making sure we close off all those loops so that we don't get into another IGO situation. We need to ensure that we're doing stuff in a timely manner and we're not the source of any frustration. So maybe that's one of the challenges for us. But I certainly support James in, you know, standing for another term and I'd be very happy to be part of the leadership team with Heather and James. Thanks.

James Bladel: Thanks, Donna. And just as an aside, I can't tell you how many times over the last year it's been valuable to have Donna weigh in with some of the context, especially when we're dealing with the GAC. And I think your experience there is invaluable and your history with the GAC is very, very helpful. So. I'm sorry, Paul, you had it - no. Okay. Stephanie, is that a new hand? Okay. I don't know if anyone else has any other questions. This is fairly straightforward.

You know, can I just, as a closing whatever, I mean I think that sometimes we - I think it goes back to maybe Stephanie's question. You know, I don't have a good answer because I guess I forgot about the political aspects of the bicameral house and everything. Once you take I think this role it's just - it's really about the grind and about the work. And I think if I had a position, I'd probably - if I had a strong view on your question, I probably wouldn't be voting for me for a second term. I think staying out of it is probably the right course. So. Maybe not the most satisfying course but probably the correct one. So.

Well thanks and thanks again. We're very fortunate to have, as I mentioned, two vice chairs that are very active, very knowledgeable and very willing to take the wheel on any particular issue. We're very fortunate to have so many active councilors and staff as well. I think there was a concern that Marika's flight was delayed and if she was going to miss this meeting I think you all would have become immediately painfully aware of just how dependent we are on her to make all of this work. So thanks to Marika and Glen and Mary and David as well for their contribution.

So we have a lot of in front of us and certainly we've made some improvements, but I would call them tweaks at this point, around the margins. We can do a lot more. And with the transition behind us, maybe we'll have a little bit more bandwidth to tackle some of these internal structural issues. So thanks.

There are people like really nodding off and already thinking about dinner. Let's call this an end to the session. And I just - thank you to everyone for putting up with a long day. I'd rather have one long day than two long days. This is the most obvious statement, but it seems like we are able to make this work with this meeting structure that we can this GNSO weekend in a single day. And it's not technically the weekend yet.

So thanks everybody and our next session, Glen and Marika, can you just through what our next session - we have I believe the meeting with the ccNSO and the board tomorrow. No? Okay. So don't listen to me. Please listen to Marika. We have important GNSO Council sessions coming up. Go ahead.

Marika Konings: Tomorrow is the meeting with the ccNSO Council at lunchtime. The meeting with the ICANN board is just before our GNSO Council meeting, which is now I think Monday. And of course Sunday evening there's an informal council session at 7 o'clock. Of course there are additional stakeholder group constituency meetings as well as PDP working group meetings and drafting teams and other working groups that meet.

James Bladel: Great. And that's the one where we encourage folks to come and air their concerns about any of the particular motions where we can discuss the amendments and we can go forward there. And that's the one with adult beverages as well that help (unintelligible) exactly.

Glen DeSaintgery: Hi, James, this is Glen. Yes and that meeting will be in here, the informal meeting, and we made it from 7 to 8 to so that we can still attend the - Bruce's farewell at top of 6. And then another little logistical notice is that when the board comes, we will have the room set up as we have it now and we will have the council and the board sit at this U and there will be food, and we'll see that the food comes in early before we start so that if people want to come and take their food they can.

And then immediately after the board and the council have finished meeting, the tech team will come in and they will take out part of this U to make it only big enough for the council and then put the rest of the seats in front here. So just to tell people that there will be quite a swift change. But the tech team is aware of it and they will - they've said they'll do it.

James Bladel: And just to reiterate, that is Monday?

Glen DeSaintgery: That's on Monday, yes.

James Bladel: That's Monday, okay. And Sunday with the prep session - and is everyone aware of the reception for Bruce? Did that invite go out to...

Glen DeSaintgery: I think it's only by invitation.

James Bladel: It went to the council list, so.

Glen DeSaintgery: It went to the council list. Yes.

James Bladel: Okay. So we know where that is and when.

Glen DeSaintgery: Yes.

James Bladel: Fantastic. Okay.

Glen DeSaintgery: It's in the ballroom of the (unintelligible).

James Bladel: Which is next door.

Glen DeSaintgery: Yes. It's just one flight of steps up.

James Bladel: Okay. I think Michele raised his hand and then Paul did you raise your hand?

Michele Neylon: Yes James, just very, very quickly. If somebody can circulate that list of meetings and locations again because I know that there's been a few things where the meetings have moved around and my poor little brain can't keep up. Thanks.

James Bladel: If you don't mind maybe, Glen, if you could circulate that to the council list.

Glen DeSaintgery: Perfect. I'll do that, James, yes.

James Bladel: Thanks.

Michele Neylon: Thanks, Glen.

James Bladel: Okay. Any other last words, questions, parting shots? Otherwise we can call this session adjourned. Okay fantastic. Thank you. Thanks everyone for your - for sticking with us today and we'll see you then I believe tomorrow for the lunch with the ccNSO Council. You can stop the recording.

END