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## ICANN Transcription

### IDNs EPDP

**Thursday, 15 December 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, 15 December 2022 at 13:30 UTC.

We do have apologies today from Farell Folly and Steve Chan at the SPS. 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 and so it's captured in the recording. Observers will remain as an attendee and will have view only chat access.

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.

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All documentation and information can be found on the IDNs EPDP wiki space. Recordings will be posted shortly after the call. Please remember to say your name before speaking for the transcript. As a reminder, those who take part in the ICANN multistakeholder process are to comply with the Expected Standards of Behavior. Thank you. Back over to our chair, Donna Austin. Please begin.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks very much, Devan. Welcome, everybody, to what is our second last call of the year. But now that we're getting closer to the last call of the year, if people are starting to think about the holidays and they think that they may not be able to make the call next week, it's probably best to let us know on the list. Obviously, we'll rethink whether to have the call next week if we have a number of folks that can attend. But at this point in time, it is our intention to go ahead and have our last call of the year next week. So that will be something to look forward to.

All right. Apologies if I'm a bit slow this morning. My alarm didn't go off so I'm scrambling a little bit. With that, I think I'm just going to hand over to Ariel. The two things that we're talking about today, we're getting close to the end of our charter question. So these are a couple of items that were parked. There actually is a charter question on singular versus plural. But it was raised by Jeff as whether it was something we should consider. So Ariel is going to take us through that. Then the evaluation criteria for requested variants have applied for the strings with restrictions. So that's GeoTLD. So you need a letter of support from the government for certain Geo-related strings. Community strings there's restrictions

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there, and also Brands have different requirements. So that's what we mean by restrictions. With that, I will hand it over to Ariel.

ARIEL LIANG:

Thanks, Donna. I will provide some background. Hopefully, that will assist our discussion. The first item about singulars and plurals. Unfortunately, I couldn't locate the exact comment from Jeff when he raised this point. This is based on my personal recollection what he asked. It seems to be very general. He basically asked whether the EPDP team has considered singulars and plurals when the group is deliberating on the String Similarity Review, specifically the hybrid model, because variants are involved. So he was wondering whether the group has considered singulars and plurals of IDN gTLDs and whether variants could make any kind of impact. That's the general question he raised and I'm hopeful that—oh, Michael has his hand up. Maybe Michael has a better recollection of it.

MICHAEL BAULAND:

Sorry. I don't think we addressed it. I just wanted to voice my opinion, but maybe it's the wrong time for that.

ARIEL LIANG:

No worries, Michael. Indeed, when the small group was deliberating on the hybrid model, they didn't discuss singulars and plurals, and that was kind of raised at the later point. I think when the small group was reporting on the hybrid model, Jeff mentioned this particular issue. Because we're talking about some of the catch-all questions left in the charter and he raised this point, so

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that's why we're going back to this point and see whether the EPDP team can address it.

I just want to provide some context for the singular/plural-related points that Jeff alluded to. In the SubPro PDP Final Report, it does have several recommendations related to singulars and plurals, because based on the 2012 round, there was no clear guidance regarding evaluating singulars and plurals of the same word. And I believe there were some issues raised because the String Similarity Panel in 2012 round ruled that singulars and plurals are not the same and they're not confusingly similar. So that caused some frustrations and confusions. I think in the SubPro PDP, they attempt to address this issue and provide more clarity so that they developed several recommendations related to singulars and plurals.

The first recommendation is 24.3. What the group recommends is that the plurals and singulars of the same word within the same language and script are prohibited in order to reduce the risk of consumer confusion. For example, if one TLD is .example and the other TLDs is .examples, they may not be both delegated because they're considered confusingly similar. So this recommendation essentially will expand the scope of String Similarity Review because singulars and plurals, they may or may not visually resemble each other. But if you do want to consider singulars and plurals, that will expand the scope of String Similarity Review.

Then to further explain this recommendation, there are several sub-bullet points. The first point is that if there's a TLD application for a singular or plural variation of an existing TLD or reserved name, then such application will not be permitted if the intended

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use is to use the singular or plural version of the existing TLD or the reserved name. That's the first sub-bullet point.

The second one is about if there's one application for a singular version of the word and there's another application for a plural version of the same word in the same language and script, then those applications will be placed in a contention set.

The third point is something quite important so I want to emphasize here too is that applications for singulars and plurals will not automatically be placed in the same contention set. Because sometimes, they may look like singular or plural of the same word but they may have very different intended use. For example, .spring and .springs could be both allowed if one of the words refers to the season spring, and then the other word refers to an elastic object, the springs in a mattress, for example. Then both TLDs can be allowed. So that's a very important point, is that they won't be automatically placed in contention set if they have very different meanings and different intended uses.

Then another aspect of this recommendation is that the SubPro Working Group recommends using a dictionary to determine the singular and plural version of the string for specific language because sometimes a singular and plural version may not visually resemble each other. It's not a simple addition of S to indicate the plural. It sometimes can be a regular kind of plural, and also for other scripts and languages rather than English or Latin, the way plural is developed is not straightforward. That's why the group recommends using a dictionary to determine the singular and plural version of the word. And if the two strings are determined to be singular or plural of each other and intended use is

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substantially similar, then only one of them can be eligible for delegation, not both of them. That's what recommendation 24.3 is about.

There's also some additional recommendations related to the singular/plural issue. One is Implementation Guidance 24.4. It basically says, "All applicants should be required to respond to an application question, asking the applicant to explain the scope of intended use of the TLD, including any ways the applicant does not intend to use the TLD." That's basically to help clarify whether one application is about a singular version of the word, the other is about the plural version of the word. If they explain how they intend to use it and if the intended use is the same, then they're going to contention set. If the intended use is different then they may not be placing a contention set. This is to help clarify the intended use for the TLD in the application questions. That's 24.4 about.

Then for recommendation 24.5, it says if two applications are submitted during the same application window for strings that create a probability of the user, assuming they're a single and plural version of the same word, but the applicants intend to use the strings in connection with two different meanings, then the applications will only be able to proceed if each of the applicants agrees to the inclusion of a mandatory Public Interest Commitment in its Registry Agreement. The mandatory PIC must include a commitment by the Registry to use the TLD in line with the intended use presented in application and must also include the commitment by the Registry that it will require registrants to

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use domains under the TLD in line with the intended use stated in the application.

So I think this recommendation is to bring forth the requirement that the Registry commit to the intended use noted in its application. If, for example, one application looks like a singular version of another application but they have two different meanings, then this recommendation is to enforce the commitment by the applicant to stick to its intended use and not to deviate from it. Hopefully, that will not cause user confusion down the road.

These are the three recommendations that related to singular and plural issues in the SubPro. I will stop here for a moment and see whether there's any confusions or additional comments from the group about this background. I see there's one hand up. I'm not sure how to pronounce your name. Sorry. Abdalmonem?

ABDALMONEM GALILA: Thank you, Ariel, for this. Actually, could we go back for one slide? Slide number five? Actually, I have doubt here. I like the idea of using the dictionary. But you know that for Arabic script to have many languages within the Arabic script, maybe for Egypt it will have the plural for some more Arabic words to be something related to Arabic in Egypt, for example. Maybe for Urdu, maybe same meaning for the singular word will be another word in plural.

If we could limit it to the dictionary to be for specific scripts, it will be much better. At the same time, it will be maybe open at some kind of homograph attack. Maybe it's plural in Arabic and for Urdu,

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it will be same meaning but different letters, but all of them in Arabic, so it may be a homograph attack. I don't know how could you handle this?

Most of your talk is related to maybe not Arabic language but I think it could happen, especially that maybe linguistic guys speak Arabic maybe in a solid way. Maybe other guys speak Arabic in a public forum of Arabic language. But the singular and the plural for academia guys or linguistic guys maybe seem meaning for plural for normal guys. So it will be somehow confusion. How could you handle it such kind of word? Thank you.

ARIEL LIANG:

Thank you so much, Abdalmonem. I don't have answer to your questions yet. I have to think about it. But Donna has her hand up. So, Donna, please go ahead.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Ariel. And notwithstanding a case intervention, I noticed in chat that there's some question of whether the concept of singular and plural actually applies to most scripts. To that end, there's a question of whether we need to discuss this at all. I think for completeness, this is something that we should have covered in our report. What I was going to suggest to the group is if the SubPro recommendation doesn't create any issues, notwithstanding that some people may be of the view that singulars and plurals don't exist in most other languages, then could we just adopt the SubPro recommendation as is for IDN gTLDs and their variants? Now, the tricky part for us is that we're



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really dealing with variants. Do we apply this recommendation to just primary label or the source label? Or is that applied to the set? I would think that common sense would say that the best way to consider this would be from a primary or source label perspective. But I'm interested to hear from others. With that, I think we'll go to Edmon.

EDMON CHUNG:

Thank you, Donna. Edmon here speaking in my personal capacity at this time. I think your suggestion is quite good. I think, as you said, for completeness sake, we probably should add something into it but just to align with SubPro. And I see some comments in the chat earlier in that direction as well. Perhaps what we could add is that for scripts and languages where it is relevant as per what the SubPro has deliberated on, then that applies. For scripts and languages where this situation doesn't apply, then obviously, it just doesn't apply. I can speak for at least Chinese and probably Japanese and Korean where this type of plural—what's the right word?—pluralization of a singular term doesn't work the same way, so complete separate kind of term. So those languages won't apply. But for the languages and script that apply, I think then the SubPro approach just basically what—

DONNA AUSTIN:

Okay. Thanks, Edmon. In line with that suggestion, do we have a sense of which scripts this would be relevant to and which scripts it would not be relevant to? I think based on what Abdalmonem raised, this could actually be relevant to Arabic. If we're taking this down to the level of specific scripts, then we may need to make

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sure that the SubPro recommendation isn't problematic for those scripts. Nigel?

NIGEL HICKSON: Thank you very much. Good afternoon, good evening to everyone, so to speak. I think I agree with what's been said. It seems that given that we can't have any fast and hard rules on this because of what it means in different languages and we had enough problems just determining what plurals meant in European scripts. So I guess yeah. But it should certainly be raised as an issue. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Nigel. Michael?

MICHAEL BAULAND: Thanks. I think this is maybe not as easy as we think it might be. Because if you apply for a TLD, for example, in Latin script, you usually do not state which language group you are targeting. Also, the problem is with the string which can be used or is used in several languages in Latin script, this would mean we would have to check on all plural forms for all languages. And in Latin script, there are quite a few languages, I can say as a Latin GP member, this may be quite complex for us to find the correct words for the LGR. If we now have to look at all possible languages and check what is the plural string, that might be quite an effort. Thanks.

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DONNA AUSTIN: Michael, if we stay silent on identifying the scripts or languages and just say that we're adopting the SubPro recommendation, does that overcome that challenge?

MICHAEL BAULAND: I'm not sure the SubPro recommendation is talking about languages. For example, if you take some strings like, I don't know, bingo, which is used in several languages, then the English plural version would be bingos but the Finnish plural version would be bingot.

DONNA AUSTIN: I think the reason for the singular is the risk of confusion. Okay. I see what you're saying. I really don't want to complicate this. All right. We'll go to Ariel and then Sarmad.

ARIEL LIANG: Thanks for the discussion. I just want to note that here we're merely going through the SubPro PDP context but it's not really the role for this group to revisit the SubPro recommendation because it has already been adopted and the specific implementation will be sorted out, I guess, in the later point of the implementation phase.

Another point I want to raise is all of the applied-for string, they have to go through the singular/plural check if any singular/plural concern is raised in your applications. So it's not going to just limit to certain script or language, it will apply to all the languages and scripts of the applied-for string. That's something I want to note, is

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we don't have to think through how this is going to be implemented specifically because that's still by SubPro. Another thing is it applies to every scripts and languages of applied-for string, not just limited to specific ones. I will stop here. I see Hadia has her hand up.

DONNA AUSTIN: Before Hadia, Sarmad, you had your hand up. I'd really appreciate it if you could explain what you mean by morphological. If you want to come back in the queue.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Sure. Thank you. I have a bad throat so please excuse me. But let me. Pluralization or, I guess, making changes in number could work in two ways, depending on how languages work. In some languages linguistically you can add a suffix or infix or, I guess, more affix in general, to an existing word and that creates a new word but it's still a singular word. That's how, for example, English works where it adds an S or ES or other suffixes to make similar to a plural.

But in some other languages, number is not really a morphological phenomenon. Morphological means that it pertains to a single word and it changes from form of the particular word. But it is more of a syntactic phenomenon. So if you want to say something plural, you would say something like "Two spring" rather than "springs," for example, which means that they're two separate words used to make a plural of singular thing.

Then multiple languages which do not have that concept of singular and plural but actually use syntactic kind of formations rather than morphological formations to create the sense of multiple things. Again, this is something which really needs to be discussed in the IRT for SubPro. But what I said was that I think clearly languages which make morphological changes will certainly qualify for this. But it's a good question that those languages which do not make morphological changes but can add on additional words so you can have a two-word label, which still, obviously, is possible, whether that will qualify for such a particular analysis or not. But that's something which will need to be discussed with IRT. Of course, if that's something this working group wants to look into, it's okay as well, of course. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Sarmad. So based on that Sarmad, you're suggesting that—I just want to clarify—if we adopted the SubPro recommendations perhaps with a qualifier for the purposes of review that this would only be for the primary or source label, then there'd be no disadvantage to adopting this recommendation. It would be the IDN implications could be sorted out during the implementation.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Could I quickly respond back to that?

DONNA AUSTIN:

Yes, please.

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SARMAD HUSSAIN: Thank you. I think my understanding is that SubPro suggests that any applied-for label would go through this process, not just the primary, because somebody could actually apply for a variant as well. But again, that's, just as I said, my understanding of the SubPro recommendation. But that's something we should clarify. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks. I have a different question. Sorry, Hadia and Maxim, to hold you up. But I just want people to think about this. Is a variant potentially plural of the source label, and does that create challenges for us in thinking about this question? Hadia and then Maxim.

HADIA EL MINIAWI: Thank you, Donna. I was sort of thinking of the problem in a way, maybe a little bit similar to what Sarmad was mentioning. I don't really think that we need to overthink the problem at this point. I think it could be sorted out during the implementation. In all cases, any label will go through checks and tests in order to ensure that there is no consumer confusion. I would say that we could put a disclaimer and refer this to Implementation. However, I stop here and hear other thoughts. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Hadia. Maxim?

MAXIM ALZOBA: Do you hear me?

DONNA AUSTIN: Yes, Maxim.

MAXIM ALZOBA: My thinking is we are dealing with situations where variants, they're actually in different scripts, different languages, or maybe in same language but different scripts. All we see on this slide is for same language, same script. As I came to conclusion there, it's not relevant to variants. Because multiples, singulars, it's an issue of the particular script or particular language. Thus, the SubPro IRT should take care of it. I do not see this to be relevant to variants. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Maxim. Ariel?

ARIEL LIANG: I just want you to know that I haven't gone through all the slides yet and I have some examples that I personally think and hopefully can help the group consider the question on whether the SubPro recommendations are sufficient. That's why I raised my hand. I just want to note I haven't finished the slides part.

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DONNA AUSTIN:

I'm really sorry, Ariel. So if you want to continue. Thanks.

ARIEL LIANG:

Okay. Sounds good. I tried to summarize the effect of the SubPro recommendation. It essentially expands the contention sets to include singulars and plurals of the same word so they may or may not visually resemble each other. But nonetheless, they could create probability of user confusion. So basically, SubPro recommendation is to help mitigate that user confusion caused by singulars and plurals that may not visually resemble each other. So that's something I want to summarize here.

Then this is the slides I created based on my own familiarity with Chinese. I tried to think of whether the SubPro recommendations are sufficient in catching singulars and plurals in the Chinese examples, including variants, so basically, the traditional and simplified Chinese. I tried to think of these different scenarios and then see whether SubPro recommendations are enough to catch those cases, and then whether this group really needs to develop additional recommendations to address that affecting variants.

The first example is we're assuming there are two applied-for strings, and then the string two is the plural form of string one. String one, this word is tā, and that means "he" in English. Then the string two is the plural form of "he," it's tā men. It means a group of men, basically. It's the plural form of "he" in Chinese, and it's a simplified Chinese. So if you're using the SubPro recommendation, you should be able to detect these two strings are singular and plural form of the same word. And then if in the application, the applicant explained the intended use is indeed this



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first string is referring to the “he” and then the second string is the plural form of “he,” and then they will be placed in the contention set.

I think the first case is kind of straightforward. I know Edmon has some comments here. He said, “This is more akin to ‘he’ and ‘them’ which should not be mapped as similar. Just my view.” I’m not the linguistic expert, but this is something I can think of based on my own language familiarity. I’m just using this for the purpose of discussion here. If others have better examples, we’ll welcome input.

Then the second example here I think of is string two is a variant of the plural form of string one. String one is still the same word, it’s “he,” and then string two is the plural form of “he,” which is “they,” but it’s all referring to a group of male, basically. But this is a variant of the plural form of “he” because it’s a traditional Chinese word of “they”. Basically, there’s a variant introduced here. Then what I look at this case is that the SubPro recommendation should still be able to catch this kind of contention in a way, because even though the traditional Chinese word of “they” look different from the simplified Chinese word of “they” for string two but they are variants to each other and they should be considered the same in terms of meaning, it’s just they appear different.

So in the application, the applicant should be able to note what’s the intended use of these two strings. If they’re intended to use to indicate the singular and plural form of the same word, then they should be able to be placing a contention set. And the SubPro Recommendation should to still be able to catch this kind of case

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involving variants. That's my personal understanding of this, but I welcome others' input or comment on the second scenario.

Then the third scenario I thought of is that string two is visually similar to the plural form of string one. So string one is still "he". Then string two is the plural form of—basically, it means "they" but it means a group of females. You see the first character look kind of similar to "he" with the exception of the last component of that character, that's an indication of female. You could argue that string two looks visually similar to the plural form of string one. But will they be placing the contention set? My understanding is no, they shouldn't be placed in a contention set because these two strings represent completely different words. And in the application, the applicant should be able to indicate what's the intended use of these two strings. And if they mean completely different words then they should have two different intended use. Even though you could argue string two is visually similar to the plural form of string one but string two is not visually similar to string one itself, they don't look alike at all. So they should not be placed in a contention set. That's my third scenario I could think of.

Donna, did you have a comment? I heard something.

DONNA AUSTIN: No. Not from me.

ARIEL LIANG: Okay. I guess your mic is open so I thought you wanted to say something. But it's okay. Okay. Let's go to the last example. This

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is a little bit confusing, but hopefully I can explain the thought behind it.

The fourth scenario is that string two is visually similar to the variant of the plural form of string one. This is a mouthful of words. String one is still “he,” the male version of “he”. And then string two is “they,” but it refers to a group of female. And then the word itself is in traditional Chinese. If you remember the third case, the string two is the simplified Chinese version of “they” which is a group of female. In the fourth example, string two is the traditional Chinese form of that. You could argue that string two is visually similar to the variant of the plural form of string one.

So there’s some kind of mental gymnastics you have to make to make the connection of string two and string one. Then I was thinking would the SubPro recommendation be able to cover analysis of this kind of case? And would these two strings be placed in contention set? What I deduced from this is that no, these two strings shouldn’t be placed in a contention set because they represent completely different words and string two looks nothing like string one so they should not be. Then the SubPro recommendation should still be enough to analyze this kind of cases.

So that’s some of the examples that I tried to think of to help the group deliberate on this question and then see whether this group needs to develop any additional recommendation to cover variants. But based on my personal analysis, I don’t think we really need to develop any additional recommendations and the SubPro recommendation should be able to cover applied-for

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strings in all the languages and scripts the applicant indicate. I'll stop here. I hope I'm not confusing everybody.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Ariel. Does anybody disagree with Ariel's conclusion that the SubPro recommendation would adequately cover the potential for singulars/plurals and variants in other scripts and languages? Michael?

MICHAEL BAULAND: Thanks. I'm not sure if we should really make strings which are singular and plural go into contention set. Because where are we going to stop there? Should we also make strings which are male or female version of the same word go into contention set like actor and actress? There are other languages with much more examples in English in which the male and female version are a bit more similar. For me, those are different words. And the same goes for the singular/plural words.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Michael. I'm trying to recall the conversation in SubPro. I think the discussion was really about the addition of add an S to a word and that creates the plural. I see Emily has a hand up. So this will be helpful. I don't know. Satish has identified child and children, whether that was intended to be covered by this recommendation; radius and radar, whether that would be covered by this recommendation. I think it's important that we get to the intent of the recommendation and then see what the

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intention of the recommendation was and see if that still applies here.

Sarmad, I might get to Emily first and then I'll come back to you. Emily?

EMILY BARABAS:

Thanks, Donna. Hi, everyone. This is Emily from ICANN Org. Probably Sarmad will have more to say on this as well. But just as one of the staff for supporting the SubPro group, I do remember that there were discussions actually somewhere raised by ICANN Org in public comments about this very question of where do you stop and why do you distinguish between singulars and plurals versus other forms of modifications such as male or female? And of course, there are many other forms as well. The SubPro recommendations do limit themselves specifically to this singular and plural question, so not any other forms of modifications. Specifically because this was something that came up in the last round, I think especially in terms of the addition of an S, for example. But of course, there are other ways that singulars and plurals modify one another, as people have put in the chat here. My understanding is that it was intended also to exempt, for example, apply to cactus and cacti and things like that but not to other types of modifications for gender or other things. But Sarmad may have other items to add as well. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Emily. Sarmad?

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**SARMAD HUSSAIN:** Thank you. So a couple of things. First, to respond to the forms of plural. I think the recommendation in SubPro says that we'll be using a dictionary. Irrespective of whether something is confusing, similar or not similar, if something is singular versus plural and listed in a dictionary, whichever dictionary is eventually selected for that particular language, those will go to contention set, or at least that's what it seems like, is in the recommendation. Again, those are discussions which will be, I guess, interpreted and finalized with the Implementation Review Team. But there is this concept of dictionary and looking up dictionary. There can be many different forms like child versus children, but if they are listed as plurals in dictionary, they would probably qualify as singular and plural irrespective of whether they're similar or not.

The second thing is yes, we had raised this with the SubPro Working Group, as Emily shared, that morphologically words can change form not by just number, but as Michael said, a gender but also case and respect. There are other factors through which morphologically a word can change form, the SubPro Working Group only shortlisted singular/plural. This was discussed earlier. Thank you.

**DONNA AUSTIN:** Thanks, Sarmad. I don't see any disadvantage or real problem to us having a recommendation that supports the SubPro recommendation for singular versus plural. I think there's support for that in chat. So we will put this out on the list. So we will have a recommendation that will go to the list for folks to consider. So I think what might be best at this point—and this is our first substantive conversation around this—is that our draft

recommendation at the moment on the singular/plural topic is that the recommendation from SubPro also applies to IDNs and their variants. I'm still a little bit twitchy about how this applies to variants.

I think that's what we'll go forward with. I think we've had some good discussion here today. So folks might come up with some other ideas when we put out the draft language, and we can come back and discuss that then. But I think for now there is reasonable support for just adopting the SubPro recommendation on this topic. So I think that's what we'll go forward with until we come back and just confirm it in a second conversation. Nigel?

NIGEL HICKSON:

Yes. Thank you very much. Of course, going out to the wider list seems very sensible indeed. But just to come back to the SubPro recommendation in itself and not specifically for International Domain Names, but I really don't understand why the plurals should go to a dictionary. As I recall in 2012, the big argument was about whether people were confused. So if I applied for hotel and someone applied for hotels, I could phish them or whatever, it will be confusing. Child and children is not confusing. So just going to a dictionary is not really appropriate at all.

DONNA AUSTIN:

So, Nigel, I'm not going to go back and undo the SubPro conversation on this topic.

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NIGEL HICKSON: But why? I just wondered—I'll shut up after this—whether the ODP looked at this.

DONNA AUSTIN: Look, I'm sure this is going to come up in the IRT. I think focusing on the dictionary meaning, I think that's more related to the example of spring and springs. So that would be allowable if the intent is that they mean two different things. So I think that's where the dictionary comes in. So, when an applicant identifies the purpose of the string and what it will be used for, so if the intent is that spring and springs will adopt different meanings of that word and be implemented in that way, then that is okay. So, I think focusing on the dictionary meaning, there is context that you need to take into account for that. So don't just focus on the dictionary meaning part because I think there is context that has to be considered as well. But I take your point. I'm not going to give a personal opinion of my thinking on it.

All right. So I think we'll keep going, Ariel. Just to let folks know that we have two items of AOB that have come up, Nigel's question about the ODP and Edmon wants to raise something as well that's kind of connected. So we'll try to leave 20 minutes at the end for that, which is going to be pretty hard because we're almost an hour through. So, Ariel, let's see how we go. If we can set 10 minutes aside at the end for those two items of AOB.

ARIEL LIANG: Sounds good. Thanks, Donna. That effectively leaves the 24 minutes to cover this other item. It's about evaluating the



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requested variants of string with restriction. So I just want to remind folks what this is about. It's related to charter question B5 which asks, "Do restrictions that apply to a TLD also apply to its variants? Are these labels equally treated as different versions of the same string?"

So that's basically referring to the TLDs that may not have standard treatments such as community based TLD, Brand TLD, the TLD subject to Category 1 safeguards, and GeoTLD. So we're talking about these types of TLDs and the variants related to those TLDs. I want you to know that this group already has developed a recommendation in response to the charter question B5. So it says, "In future new gTLD application processes, the primary applied-for gTLD and its allocatable variant labels requested by the applicant are to be treated as different versions of the same string and will be bound by the same restrictions."

So, just to provide you some rationale as a refresher of why this group developed this recommendation. Basically, "Agreed that a restriction applied to the primary gTLD also apply to the allocatable variants requested by the applicant." So, for example, if the primary applied-for TLD is a Brand TLD, then the variant requested by the applicant should also be Brand TLD and bound by the same restriction. However, when the group developed this recommendation, we had limited discussion regarding evaluating applications of variants of such gTLDs. So that's why we're picking up on this point here. But the group did reconfirm that the applicant will submit one application covering both the primary gTLD and the allocatable variant the applicant wishes to activate. So that means when the application is submitted, the evaluation

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criteria will apply to the sets in the same application, and all applied-for labels in the set are expected to go through the evaluation objection, public comment in each stage of the new gTLD application process together. So that's what the group kind of understood when developing this recommendation.

So now we're picking up on the point the group didn't discuss in depth. So I think at this point, should the requested variant meet the same application requirements and evaluation criteria as the primary gTLDs? So that's the point we want to follow up on. I just want to give you some context as reminder. So for a community-based TLD, the applicant will need to submit written endorsement by established institutions representing the community. Then once the TLD passes evaluation and go to the step of delegation, and in the Registry Agreement it has the Specification 12 that's specifically related to community-based TLDs. So, the question here is if an applicant applies for a variant of a community-based TLD, does it still need to submit written endorsement by the established institution for that variant as well in addition to the primary? I guess that's kind of how you look at this question from a community-based TLD perspective.

Then for Brand TLD, the applicant will need to submit proof that the applied-for string is identical to a registered trademark of the registry operator. Also it cannot be a generic string. So these are some of the requirements for Brand TLD. So if you apply for a variant of a Brand TLD, does that variant also need to be identical to a registered trademark of the registry operator? That's something we want to clarify here.

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Then for GeoTLD, the applicant will need to provide a documentation of support or non-objection from relevant governments or public authorities. So in terms of variants, does the variant also need to have support or non-objection from the relevant government or public authorities in addition to the primary?

Then lastly, for Category 1 safeguards, the TLD is subject to Category 1 safeguards. So what's required here I think is adoption of relevant Category 1 safeguards as contractually binding requirements in Specification 11. So I think this one probably we don't need to discuss too much in depth. I guess this is more like of a post delegation thing where it's not really related to the evaluation part. But then there's one part, a specific evaluation panel will confirm whether applied-for gTLD falling into the Category 1 category. So I guess here the applicability is that whether the variant also needs to be confirmed to be a Category 1 as well in an evaluation stage. So I guess that's the way to look at this question, by analyzing that in the context of different types of TLDs that we're discussing. I will stop here and see whether there's any inputs, comments, or further questions about this.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Ariel. A couple of things here. So this isn't something—I don't think we've discussed it as part of this PDP. But in my mind, if you have a variant of the identified primary label, then the meaning must be the same. So in the context of considering these things, do we consider the set? I think where this becomes problematic is the Brand TLDs because of the trademark

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requirement for the primary. So whether that has to apply to the variant, it could be tricky.

I just want to note with the GeoTLDs that a GeoTLD is really limited to country territory names, some regions, and some capital cities. So the geopolitical, ethnic, social, cultural representation, that doesn't apply. So if we just set that aside for a while.

The Category 1 safeguards, I think what's going to be important here is the meaning of the primary or source label. Just to put that in the context, at the end of one of our calls recently, Sarmad asked if we had considered whether the variant of a primary could be applied for but the primary not be applied for. But looking at these questions here, I think the primary becomes important because there has to be some identification of the set and it has to be based on a single label which is the primary or the source. So in thinking about these restrictions, I think we have to think about it as the primary and its variants and the set that's being applied for. So just adding a little bit of context there. Okay, Edmon.

EDMON CHUNG:

Thank you, Donna. I think I generally agree with what you said. Building on what you said, I think a couple of slides before, the original principle that it is one application applies here, what we probably should talk about is how it applies a little bit. So, taking Ariel's examples on the community TLD or the GeoTLDs, there might be different cases, right? So let's take .kids, for example, and apply it in Chinese. There might be children's organizations in Hong Kong, in Taiwan, in mainland China, in Singapore that would describe children or kids in Chinese but in simplified Chinese

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versus traditional Chinese. So the way I would see it is that both would apply. So, a support letter that comes from a mainland China children's organization would use the simplified Chinese as the identifier. The Supporting Organization coming from Hong Kong and Taiwan would use the traditional Chinese as the TLD. So I think both of them, there's no need for including multiple letters of support from the same organization for essentially same TLD just for the purpose of submitting the allocatable variant.

Likewise, for GeoTLDs, while you can think of it as a localized situation, there's also the regional. I mean, .asia as an example, if we apply for .asia in Han character, then we have the situation with the Japanese, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, the same thing. So I would also argue that it's either. So, the appropriate organization from a particular region, they might be using their variant or the primary, both will be acceptable, and they will be considered the entire set. So, hopefully that adds to the conversation.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Edmon. Any thoughts from others? Dennis?

DENNIS TAN: Thank you, Donna. It's not a question but just a clarification from Edmon. I was confused as to the example you raised. You're talking about a single organization applying and seeking support from different communities based on their use of the script, right, like the simplified traditional uses of the Han script in different parts of the world. Or one example of these different organizations

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from different parts of mainland China using simplified Chinese, applying for the simplified version of it, and another organization based in Hong Kong applying for the traditional Chinese. So I was clarifying, are you talking about single applicant seeking support from these organizations across different territories or different territories applying for the same set, essentially?

EDMON CHUNG: Donna, if I may.

DONNA AUSTIN: Yes, please.

EDMON CHUNG: I'm talking about single applicant looking for different support letters from different organizations around the world. Ariel's question was whether the Supporting Organizations should provide multiple letters of support for the primary TLD and the variants that apply for. From what I see, the principle of it being one application should apply. So from each organization, there should just need it to be one letter of support. And that letter of support would indicate the TLD in it, the form that is relevant to that geographic region or linguistic community, as long as they are the right variant that or the primary domain that is applied for. So, single applicant and different Supporting Organizations, and each Supporting Organization should just be required to submit one supporting document. And that supporting document should only be required to identify one TLD. That's what I think makes sense.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Edmon. So I think what you're saying is based on that one application will be submitted for a primary and two or three variants, that depending on which variant applies to which organization, it's just one letter of support, it's not potentially four letters of support to cover off each label identified within the set in that single application. I think that's what you're saying.

EDMON CHUNG: Yes.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay, great. Dennis, Hadia, and then Justine.

DENNIS TAN: Thank you, Donna. Just to respond quickly to Edmon, yes. Thank you for the clarification. I think what this case of what Edmon just described to us is consistent with our discussions regarding an applicant providing justification to the variant labels that they want to apply for. So I think that's a clear example of how a applicant of a GeoTLD seeking application of multiple labels in the set and justification from the different territories, organizations, countries, or what have you, that will make the application stronger. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Dennis. Hadia?

HADIA EL MINIAWI: I just raised my hand to support what Edmon is saying. So we are treating the primary, the variant, as one set. So it does make sense to have one letter of support for the entire set. However, I would like to say that the letter needs to acknowledge the entire set and not only the primary. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Hadia. Any thoughts on the Brand TLD? So, obviously, a Brand TLD has to have a trademark. So the primary label that's applied for will have to have that Brand mark requirement. But what are folks' thoughts on the variant? Does that also have to be trademarked? Does that have to be an attached trademark to that? No thoughts on that? Edmon?

EDMON CHUNG: I get the same concept applies. The way that I see it is it should be—and one of the cases in here, the last one listed here, from that exist in traditional Chinese, but if they want the simplified Chinese, that might not exist in terms of the trademark registration if they're a Hong Kong company. It might because they also do business in China, but it might not. They may not have a kind of a trademark registration for the simplified version. So I don't think that's the right approach. They should just be required to provide proof for any one of them. And if they have multiple, then by all means, provide multiple. But in this case, I would say it's optional. It is, again, back to the principle of it being one application that it should require one proof of trademark.

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DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Edmon. I wish we had our representatives from that IPC Constituency here because I'd be interested to hear their views specifically on the Brand issue. So I think we might need to get some input from the IPC, Intellectual Property Constituency, on this one. In principle, Edmon, I understand where you're coming from, but I just don't know whether applying that, what seems logical is we'll kind of break the intent of a Brand TLD in some way. So I think we need specific input from the IPC on that one.

Okay. So I think what I'm hearing is that—it's kind of solidifying for me that we do need to attach importance to the primary label and what the intended meaning of that label is, particularly when it comes to a community-based TLD or Geo or something that falls into a Category 1 safeguard to ensure that the set is consistent with that meaning. Maybe that's just a personal opinion and others don't agree with that. But I think what the sense is is that when you think about these different categories that the set is important and ensure that there is support. If it's a community, then the identified community actually supports the set. They can speak specifically to one of the variants in the set but there must be support for the set. And the GeoTLDs ... So the letter of support is only attached to the capital city, I think. So I don't think you can apply for a country name anyway. So that knocks that out. But I think the same principle applies. Then with the Category 1 safeguards, again, the meaning of the primary becomes important because that identifies whether there needs to be a safeguard, so the set becomes important there. Justine?

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JUSTINE CHEW: Thanks, Donna. Can I just clarify when you say the support for the set has to come from the relevant party—when we say set, do we mean the collection that is being applied for? Or do we mean the collection that is generated by the Root Zone LGR?

DONNA AUSTIN: For me, it's a set that's being applied for.

JUSTINE CHEW: Okay. Thank you. I'm not saying one variant. I just want to clarify so we understand clearly. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Good question. For me, it's a set because that's what's being applied for and that's what's in the application. I don't know that we need to take it further than that. Just trying to keep the evaluation clean I think. It just has to be what's been applied for in the application.

Okay. So we need to get some input from our IPC folks on Brands but I think we've got general agreement on kind of a concept or a principle that we can develop language around. Okay. With that, we've got 10 minutes left for AOB. Nigel, I know you wanted to talk about the ODP but I want to go to Edmon first because there's an item that Edmon wanted to raise. So, Edmon, did you want to—

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EDMON CHUNG:

Sure, Donna. Thank you. Now I'm speaking in my role as Board liaison. I guess I just want to note that since a few ICANN meetings ago, ICANN73, when Donna raised this to the Board, where the ODP and ODA process and how in the future we can try to minimize the lead time from policy recommendation to implementation, one of the things that was done is that we have asked staff to continue to update the Board, especially from myself, on the Board IDN-UA Working Group. We have been consistently receiving updates from the staff about the IDN EDP and to raise issues where there might be requirement to further consider once the recommendations come in.

So one of the things that we did identify recently is that based on the Board resolution that kind of started this IDN EPDP as well as the ccPDP on a similar topic, there was a request to have some coordination between the two. I understand, of course, the coordination has continued to happen. But I think one of the observations is that there are a few areas that seem to be that the recommendations will diverge. So the handling of certain issues would be different from the ccPDP recommendations versus the GNSO EPDP recommendations. What the working group has asked me to try to convey to in fact this working group as well as the ccPDP is that to help the Board to work through the process once the recommendations put in, it's best if it's possible for the group to consider adding a section in the recommendations which identifies the divergent recommendations, especially between the GNSO and ccNSO, and to provide a brief rationale and obviously indicating that it should be acceptable at the root. Because I guess the main overarching consideration is the root as seen by the general public doesn't really care between the g side and the cc

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side. And when there are different policies implemented in terms of IDNs for ccs and gs, we need to figure out whether that is appropriate for the root level.

So I guess the short ask is that in the report that this group produces, if there is a section for identifying the divergent points between the ccs and the gs, and also give a brief note noting that that it is acceptable at the root level or the rationale for the divergence, that would be good. So, hopefully that is clear.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Edmon. I think that sounds sensible and I think it's something that we can do, but I do have an ask for you. We have had conversations with the ccPDP but it seems conversations within the Board have already identified areas of divergence. If that's the case, could you please let us know what they are? Because I think that will be helpful. I guess there's a difference between inconsistent recommendations and areas of divergence. To me, I don't think we have recommendations that are necessarily inconsistent, given the purpose of what the ccPDP is doing and what we're doing. So if the Board in their discussions have identified areas of divergence, can you please let us know what they are so that we can ensure that we can have another conversation with ccPDP? Maybe there's a way to fix that before it goes to the final report. But if you're already seeing areas of divergence based on the briefings you're getting from staff, please let us know so that we can try to do something about that before we get in the situation where the Board has decided, "Well, these are areas of divergence." We may have a different view. So that's a request that I would make.

EDMON CHUNG:

Thank you, Donna. I'll move from the Board and personal views. So as a personal view, I think generally it's well aligned. But there are some nuances to the ccPDP approach and the GNSO approach. But still, there's a slight difference between the two. Now, moving from a Board perspective, given that situation, then those are the things that we probably need to identify.

Sorry, Sarmad. I don't know whether we're putting on the spot, but Sarmad has identified some of the nuances for us, including dealing with, for example, how to accept or not accept an application to continue. So in the cc world, because they can apply at any time, there's no application window or something, they just know if the LGR doesn't exist, then that's rejected until it's accepted. In the gTLD space, it makes sense, because the application windows may be few and far between, although Option 2 might make cc more frequent. But the approach we took in the GNSO was that the application we kept and held until the LGR is fully developed, and then it can continue.

So those type of differences. I think there are a few of them that were identified that I think—again, moving back to the personal side, I don't think they are conflicting if that's the same thing. But it's still somewhat divergent and there's nuances between how it's handled, and therefore, in order for the Board to fully consider the whole package from both sides is to have the information that says, "Oh, this has been considered. This is the view from the working group, why it's acceptable." Does that make sense?

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DONNA AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay. So again, my request is you've identified areas of divergence in the Board discussion that have already been identified. Please let us know what they are so that we're not second guessing what they may be. Then we can ensure that if there's reasons for those inconsistencies, we can speak to those in the final report, and likewise, so can the ccns. But I'm going to be honest, we don't know what we don't know. So thanks for raising it. I think it's really important. But please, as these items of divergence are being discussed within the Board, if you can let us know, that gives us plenty of time to make sure that we cover them off.

EDMON CHUNG: Yes. I'll take note of that and try to come back with, if not a full list, at least some indicators of those areas of divergence. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks very much, Edmon. Thanks for raising it. It's better to know now than issue the report, and then the Board comes back and says, "Well, what are you going to do about this?" Hadia?

HADIA EL MINIAWI: Thank you. I'm sort of attending both PDPs. Of course, I did not know that you will be discussing this today so I cannot really speak in detail to it. But I would say I would agree with you, Donna, that there is divergence but not inconsistency. One thing I recall, for example, is in relation to confusing similarities and the comparison of labels. So, this is done differently, but again its requirements of ccTLDs are different than the requirements of

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gTLDs. For example, an IDN ccTLD must be a meaningful representation of the territory. This is something that does not exist in gTLD. So, ccTLDs already are limited because of this necessity.

Also, I would say one other thing that might be different is also related to objections. But then again, this is because objections are also related to what's going to pass and what's not going to pass and that's based on how you do the comparison and confusing similarity. So that depends on another decision that we also did differently. So I would agree that there is divergence but not inconsistencies, and this is because of the difference between ccTLD and gTLD and criteria for applying and what's possible and what's not possible. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Hadia. I think you've just made our case for us, and I appreciate you doing that. Most of the reason for the divergence is because the two different processes, and the gTLD will end up with a contract and the CC doesn't end up with a contract. Again, Edmon, thanks for raising. It's better that we know now rather than this takes us by surprise so we can deal with it.

Nigel, you wanted to talk about ODP. Hopefully, folks can just hang around. Nigel, go ahead.

NIGEL HICKSON:

Thank you very much. I didn't really want to talk about it so much just to raise the issue. I mean, others were on the call and I think you were, Donna, as well. Option 2 which seemed to be—well, I'm

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not saying the favorite, but Option 2 which was certainly being pressed as a more efficient way of going forward, although I'm not convinced, necessarily, but obviously, I have to look at these things. But it seemed to suggest that if we went for Option 2, then our work would have to wind up before I think what our timeline was. But you're the expert, I'm not at all, I just wanted to flag it.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Nigel. I appreciate your flagging it. It's the first time I'd seen that this PDP is potentially in the way of a next round. So it was a surprise to me as well. So it's something that we will try to get a better understanding of from perhaps Karen's team, but my understanding is that Option 2 is something that still needs to be fleshed out. I'd have to say that my reading of it was that the completion of the IDN EPDP isn't necessarily in the way of a next round. But it could be that—where the terminology gets a bit loose. But if Option 2 does go forward, then within each 12-month period, there would be an application window. So it may be that this work may not be completed in time for applicants to apply for IDNs and their variants until perhaps that second opportunity. So that's what I'm not sure of. But either way, I know we're all committed to getting this done in the timeframe that we've identified for Council, so it's really important that we meet that first deadline, which is, I think, April of next year to get our draft initial report out for public comment, and I think we're on a good path to get there.

Dennis, I'm just going to put some pressure on you. So with Phase 2, hopefully we will be in a position to fast track that. What I mean by fast track is that we've identified I think an end date for



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Phase 2 that's 2025 at the moment. I'd really like to be able to bring that forward to 2024, maybe early 2024, if we can do that.

So, thanks for raising it, Nigel. I do want to get a better understanding of whether the completion of this PDP is actually in the way of a next round. And if it is, then maybe we have to go to the Council and say we need a face-to-face meeting to get through the bulk of our work and that's if you want us to meet that timeframe. So we will get a better understanding of what that means. As you said, Nigel, I think it's new information for everybody. I think Karen said it's a 406-page report, and I certainly haven't read that yet.

All right. So with that, I think we will end the call for today. I think what we're going to try to come back to next week is string similarity. But as I said, if people are really thinking that they're not going to make next week's call, can you please let us know on the list and we may make a call early next week to cancel that call if we don't have enough people that can attend.

All right. Thanks, everybody. You can end the recording now, Devan.

DEVAN REED: Thanks, Donna. Thank you all for joining. I'll end the recording now. Have a wonderful rest of your day.

NIGEL HICKSON: Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]