

ICANN Strategy for WSIS+20

15 July 2024

To: Sally Costerton, Interim President and CEO ICANN
Tripti Sinha, Chair ICANN Board of Directors

Cc: Katrina Sataki & Patricio Poblete, ccNSO Appointed members of the Board

Dear Sally & Tripti

We write on the subject of Internet Governance (IG) and ICANN's current positioning regarding WSIS +20, GDC and other ongoing matters.

During the IG sessions at both ICANN 79 and 80, members of the ccNSO and other parts of the community expressed concerns about ICANN's approach to the latest round of multilateral IG discussions.

For clarity, those concerns are not about ICANN's approach to Multi-Stakeholderism as a model for dealing with IG generally but rather ICANN's approach to promoting and defending the ICANN Multi-Stakeholder Model (MSM) and ICANN's specific role in IG in the context of the GDC and the WSIS+20 review. Within this, the way that ICANN engages with and supports its community in this work is also of concern.

We acknowledge that ICANN may well be communicating directly with relevant parties in bi-lateral meetings. However, ICANN appears to be limiting its role within the larger ICANN community to setting up a "WSIS+20 Outreach Network" which consists of a mailing list, facilitating webinars to assist community discussions and encouraging members of the community to talk directly to their individual governments. ICANN has specifically excluded any prospect of developing or sharing common positions or statements that could emerge from this Network's work.

Whilst direct communication with governments is an important part of a strategic approach to dealing with WSIS+20 etc. at an international level it is, in our view, not nearly enough to counter the ongoing persistent threats to ICANN's multi-stakeholder model. Some community members can talk to their government **but many cannot**. A few of those that can, find themselves intimately involved in that government's positioning on IG. For the vast majority of those who are able to make direct contact the best they can hope for is that the ICANN MSM is high enough on the priority list for that government to speak in favour of it at multilateral discussions.

Traditionally, the ICANN MSM has been promoted and defended by ICANN leading the community. This has meant that there was a central, coordinated voice and point of contact delivering clear messages on behalf of the community as a whole. The power of such messages is significantly enhanced because ICANN is an international organisation charged with a significant role in the IG eco-system. In addition, consistent messaging to wider stakeholders and governments in particular adds weight and credibility to the technical community's inputs, and increases our chances of successful continued participation as the global internet governance adapts and evolves.

We think it is essential that ICANN change its approach. It must resume the work of leading ICANN's whole community in explaining, promoting and defending ICANN's MSM in the context of the GDC and the WSIS+20 review. This change needs to happen as soon as possible, as the pressure and challenges to our model are becoming more urgent week by week.

If you would like to discuss this matter we would welcome the opportunity to do so.

Best Regards,

On behalf of the ccNSO Council,

Alejandra Reynoso
ccNSO Chair