PRAGUE – ICANN44-PRAGUE_Mon25June2012-Welcome Ceremony
Monday, June 25 2012 – 09:00 to 10:30
ICANN - Prague, Czech Republic

Good morning. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to introduce board chair, ICANN, Dr. Stephen Crocker.

[Applause]

DR. STEVE CROCKER: Wow! Well, good morning. Welcome. We welcome you to Prague and the Czech Republic, and thank you for being part of ICANN's 44th international public meeting, and to our gracious hosts here in Prague, we feel very welcomed.

I've visited Prague many times -- several times, I should say, most recently in February, earlier this year, to help celebrate the 20th anniversary of the connection to the Internet for this country.

The Internet community here is one of the most vibrant in the world and it is definitely a leader among its neighbors, and it's always a pleasure to be here.

You have heard a lot about the big events: the new gTLDs and the selection of our CEO, Fadi Chehade.

While these have attracted much attention, I want to share with you a few of the many things in progress across the rest of the organization.

Accountability and transparency continue to be all-important for us, and I have added effectiveness as an essential element. If we don't get our job done and get it done properly and quickly, no one will really care how transparent or accountable we are.

And toward this end, let me briefly mention several activities that I said are in progress.

We are evolving the schedule of our board meetings and the use of our meeting time. We want to make the board more available for interaction with the community. The Friday board meetings were poorly attended, and as you've heard, we've cancelled them, but we still get our work done.

But more to the point, they didn't provide any real interaction with the board.

And the resolutions, as they should have been and were, were determined well in advance. And that's the proper way for board meetings to operate.

We will have public board meetings when there are very important or controversial matters on the agenda. The decision that we took in Singapore to advance the gTLD program, the controversial decision surrounding xxx, are primary examples of what I have in mind.

Otherwise, the board will operate quietly and effectively to respond to the steady stream of actions that the board is required to process. This happens continuously throughout the year -- telephonic board meetings, face-to-face board meetings, when the board is assembled together -- and we'll be happy to say much more about this at the Thursday open forum and use that opportunity for vigorous interaction with the board.

We also are involving and improving the coordination with the GAC through the institution of a GAC register to track inputs from the GAC

and to make sure each piece of advice is processed properly and promptly. We intend to increase our interaction with governments, working particularly with the GAC.

We have a new CEO, as you've heard, and really two new CEOs. As we announced Friday, Fadi Chehade was selected and has agreed to join us, with a bit of a delay. You will hear from him shortly today.

We also have, of course, an interim period and the board has appointed Akram Atallah, our chief operating officer, as the CEO during this interim period, and you will hear from him as well.

The Affirmation of Commitments remains very high on our list of priorities. The implementation of the 27 ATRT recommendations is moving forward. Some have been completed. Some are taking longer. We are increasing the attention level even during this interim period. And this effort is not going to get squeezed out due to attention to the new gTLD program or indeed anything else.

At the same time, the other two reviews that were mandated as part of the Affirmation of Commitments, the Security, Security, Stability, and Resiliency and the WHOIS reviews, their teams have both delivered their reports. We will begin evaluating the cost and resources associated with their recommendations and we will go through the full public comment process.

We thank the teams, particularly Emily Taylor and Kathy Kleiman on the WHOIS report, and Alejandro Pisanty, Jeff Brueggeman, Martin Hannigan and Simon McCalla on the security, stability, and resiliency report, along with the staff for their truly extraordinary efforts. A huge

amount of work goes into these, and I think it's important for all to understand the magnitude of these efforts. We will give these reports our full attention.

We also note that the work on the WHOIS Review Team fits into a yet larger picture of activities that includes the interactions between law enforcement community and the registrars and also SSAC's development of technical framework.

We are looking forward to substantial progress on the longstanding WHOIS issues.

Also the SSRT report is just one part of the security efforts. We are strengthening ICANN's internal systems. The spate of problems with the gTLD system command the Board's attention as well as everyone else's. We want to make sure we understand what happened and we want to learn from that experience, and although I didn't write this down, it is quite obvious we want to fix them and not make the same mistakes going forward.

I'm also pleased to mention the longstanding support of DNSSEC is paying off and it is continuing. At this meeting, in addition to the beginner's session this afternoon and the regular strong program on Wednesday, there is now an implementer session that is heavily subscribed and will bring together two dozen or more implementers to share experiences with each other. This is an area I have been personally involved in for a long time, and so it pleases me greatly to see the gathering swell.

In broader areas, particularly abuse of domain name registrations, we are pleased to see closer and more substantive cooperation with the law enforcement community and with other parts of governments.

Equally, we are pleased to see cooperation from the registrar and registry community.

While we wish we were further along, we remain committed to insightful and meaningful dialogue and decisions.

Moving on to other things, the New gTLD Program will obviously bring pressure on our organizational structure. And I want to say a few words about that.

We will, of course, watch to see the exciting applications and business models that will arise from these new TLDs, and while that's going on we are focused on making sure there is tight fiscal control so that the expenses are tracked and managed carefully, and we will also oversee a careful evolution of the organizational structure within the staff.

It's possible the GNSO may also be affected by the sharp increase in the number of gTLDs, although it's also possible that their structure could easily accommodate the influx of new gTLDs. Whatever the case is, we stand ready to work with the GNSO to help make whatever adjustments may be needed.

In addition to managing expenses carefully, we are also very conscious of the visibility and the discussion throughout the community of the funds we have received in this program. Several hundred million dollars is an attention-getter under all circumstances.

So the questions are how big is the surplus, how much money is needed to protect against future risk, how much will be done with that surplus?

We are in the early days of the program and it is premature to make decisions. We will make continual assessments and we will report on these on a regular and full basis. But with respect to the disposition of any surplus, we will not do so until we have a full and open process. We welcome advice and suggestions starting now, and find a way to open that discussion and keep track of things, but at present the only commitment we are making is not to make decisions too quickly.

In our interactions with organizations and governments around the world, we have a vibrant global partner's team and we are engaging on the relevant issues that affect the Internet community. This includes, of course, participation in the Internet Governance Forums, or IGFs, support for Internet society's excellent initiative on IPv6, the world IPv6 launch day on June 6th, just a couple of weeks ago.

We would like to see increased interaction and engagement with civil society, and we will look for ways to do so.

All of this is consistent with our commitment to the private sector-led multistakeholder model for Internet governance.

Finally, I want to mention a few major milestones within our community. This is the five-year anniversary of the regional At-Large organizations, or RALOs, and the 10-year anniversary of ALAC, and I'm pleased to be wearing their button. It's still -- yes.

This is also the 10-year anniversary of LACNIC, the regional address registry for Latin America and the Caribbean, and we welcome NIC Chile to the 25-year club.

As you can see, there is a lot going on.

Rod will tell you even more and we look forward to engaging in a broad dialogue during the public forum.

It's now my privilege and pleasure to introduce the next speaker, the Minister of Industry and Trade for the Czech Republic.

Our host nation is an Internet leader. The Czech Republic is a world leader in the transition to the next generation Internet Protocol, IPv6, with 8.6% of Web sites available over IPv6. The nation has also pioneered global efforts to sign the root. Dot cz already had DNSSEC in place for two years when ICANN signed the root two years ago in 2010. And in fact, the work done here in the Czech Republic, along with the work in Sweden, Brazil, and Bulgaria, paved the way for ICANN.

It's now my privilege and pleasure to introduce our next speaker, the Minister of Industry and Trade, Dr. Martin Kuba. Welcome.

[Applause]

DR. MARTIN KUBA: Mr. President, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honor for me to be able to welcome you to the 44th ICANN meeting which, after ten years, is coming back to Central and Eastern Europe. Over that time, Internet has traveled a long way, but it's become a day-to-day part of our lives.

Now the ICANN meeting is starting, heeding further changes in the Internet world when higher level domains can be registered by also cities, companies, and different types of alphabets can be used, including Arabic, Mandarin, et cetera.

The World Wide Web is thus becoming much more open and it remains to be the dynamic medium which is open to change. I believe that's perhaps the key message that should be voiced here in Prague.

And the Czech Republic has also traveled a long way on the information highway. It cannot stay a country of historic monuments and beer.

It is our objective that the Czech Republic uses and develops its potential so that it gets into the spotlight of leading world cooperation and becomes an ICT super power.

Over the past few years, a number of companies have established their headquarters here, such as AT&T, DHL, IBM, or SAP.

Czech businesses are not lagging behind either. Let me mention, for example, AVG and other companies whose anti-virus companies protect about 30 times more workstations than is the number of Czech citizens.

What we see across the world is the shift from the economics of goods or materials to the economics of services. In building this knowledge society, it is very important that we are capable of absorbing new technologies, and we're very happy to see that the Czech Republic is slowly becoming a leader in ICT. As regards high-speed Internet, electronic communication networks, those are espoused much more now. In this country, they are becoming part of our utility infrastructure and part of our day-to-day lives.

The development of high-speed technologies depends on the creation of multimedia services and platforms, converged services which will have a lot of bearing on the activities of even medium-sized enterprises in the globalized world, and improve everyone's lives.

Czech Republic has become an attractive destination for I.T. investors. Why is that? First and foremost, we have a highly qualified workforce. The number of graduates in I.T. and computer science is increasing. We have about 20,000 graduates every year.

It is very important that these graduates are in touch with the practical world. Here I would focus, for example, the EU Centre of Excellence at the Department of Cybernetics at the Czech Technical University which cooperates with the U.S. laboratory Air Force Research Lab.

There is another project, a supercomputer center, in the town of Ostrava which is called I.T. for Innovations and which should rate among the most performing supercomputers here.

I would also like to mention an Internet exchange point run by NIX Association which ranks amongst the largest ISPs in the world, and its capacity exceeds 1,000 GBPS.

Foreign investment, indeed, is a priority of our ministry. I have to mention here the activities of the Czech trade company which not only promotes the Czech Republic as an investment destination, helping investors to set up business here.

I should perhaps also mention the role the Czech Republic plays as regards copyright and intellectual property right on the Internet where

our arbitration court has the jurisdiction to decide on the EU domain-related disputes.

There have been over 1,000 disputes already processed and the arbitration court uses a unique online platform.

Here only, not only the EU domain disputes are judged, but also other domains such as dot com, dot cz, dot org, et cetera.

As regards Internet technologies, I would also like to highlight the role of our organization, cz.nic, which has brought the ICANN meeting to Prague and which makes the Czech Republic become one of the leading countries as far as Internet technologies are concerned.

According to latest surveys, IPv6 is supported by 14% of the most important webs, which is three times more than in the U.S. We also fare well as regards DNS security, where DNSSEC covers more than one-third of Czech domains.

I'm very happy to announce that I've been able to sign a memorandum of understanding with cz.nic association on the future cooperation in Internet administration.

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that the ICANN meeting which starts today will be a successful one, and it will, besides the generic top-level domains, be of inspiration, especially for those of you who may be interested in investing in the Czech Republic. There you can rely not only on highly qualified graduates, high-quality infrastructure, but also on the backing of our government as well as of myself as the Minister of Trade and Industry.

Thank you for your attention.

[Applause]

MR. ROD BECKSTROM: Thank you very much, Minister Kuba, for that articulate presentation and for your aggressive support for new Internet technologies such as IPv6 and DNSSEC. It's very encouraging and it's a performance that we hope many ministers, other ministers around the world, will take note of.

I'm here now to express our gratitude for our host today, cz.nic, and give -- for the warm welcome they provided all of us to this majestic city of Prague. And I'm pleased to welcome its CEO, Ondrej Filip.

He's been the CEO since 2004, and he serves on the board of NIC.CZ. Also Euro-IX, the European Internet Exchange Association, as well as DNS-OARC. He's a former member of the ICANN Country Code Name Supporting Organization Council and a former technical director and board member at IPEX. He's a member of the U.N. stakeholder group that assists the Secretary-General in convening the Internet Governance Forum. We hereby welcome Ondrej Filip. Thank you.

[Applause]

ONDREJ FILIP: Thank you very much, Rod, for that introduction.

Dear Mr. Chairman, Dear Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the beautiful city of Prague.

The administration of the Czech national domain, CZ.NIC, is proud to host this 44th ICANN meeting and thus with a hint of exaggeration is continuing the ancient tradition of Prague, which has for centuries attracted the world's prominent scientists and personalities to work together and push the frontiers of human knowledge a bit further.

Understandably enough, the resources of a small country in this context are limited, too, although you will certainly use several Czech inventions during the strenuous negotiations to take place here.

To give you an example, some of you are perhaps looking at me -- and some of us -- some of you probably are looking at the screens of your laptops through contact lenses, invented by the Czech Professor Wichterle. Also, few people will realize during the discussions about Internet security that the word "botnet," so frequent in this area, has its origin in the Czech word "robot," first used by the Czech writer, Karel Capek. And if you have a cup of coffee during a break, you may use another Czech invention -- the key one -- the sugar cube.

[Laughter]

ONDREJ FILIP: Naturally, these small Czech inventions are not enough and science must be cultivated at the global level. Rudolph II, the Czech King and Holy Roman Emperor, was aware of this as early as his time in the 16th century, which is why he invited a large number of distinguished scientists, artists, and alchemists to Prague.

Let me mention, for example, Tycho Brahe and his assistant, Johannes Kepler, who made their fundamental discoveries in no other place but in

Prague. This tradition went on, for example, with Bernard Bolzano or Albert Einstein who worked here later on.

So today, this tradition is continued also by us, the cz.nic association. Consequently, all major Internet builders have been invited to Prague to meet at the 44th ICANN meeting, and I hope that the unique atmosphere of the Czech capital city will inspire you to come up with new ideas for how to move the Internet from the technical and organizational perspective a little further once again.

Ladies and gentlemen, the history of this country is full of great moments which we are proud of, but unfortunately also of moments which we would like to forget.

In 1968, when Dr. Crocker, who is sitting close to me, was writing his first RFC Document Number 1 and a group of other people around him were laying the foundation of the Internet, one of the most amazing inventions of our era, this country had completely different concerns. At that time, it was occupied by the tanks of the five armies of the former Eastern bloc, which for a long 20 years put a halt to the desire of the Czechs and Slovaks for freedom and democracy.

So most of us here, Czechs, grew up in a country where people needed a permit to travel, but only a few selected were entitled to receive it. All media were subject to heavy censorship. All communication was controlled and the thought of free global communication was far from being welcome here.

The Czechs usually respond to difficult moments with their specific sense of humor, so we used to say that we had freedom of expression,

just like in the west, but we just didn't have a freedom after such speech.

[Laughter]

So luckily, at the time when the Internet was first brought to the attention of ordinary people, our country returned to democracy.

So the Internet meant a real revolution in many areas. Thousands of new services were created and many people found jobs, thanks to the Internet. It brought opportunities for economic development of individuals and entire nations. However, its potential benefits for humanity have not been exhausted and it would be a big mistake to see the Internet as a purely economic instrument. The fact that I lived my childhood in an isolated country may have contributed to me realizing today more than ever that the Internet is not just about business. It is more about freedom, commitment, and millions of enthusiasts who decided to support a good cause and help improve and expand this network.

Our association, cz.nic, the host of this meeting, is among those enthusiasts who seek a sophisticated Internet environment and refined Internet community.

This is the reason why the members of our association have decided to give the funds raised by the registration fees back to the Internet community and support a number of interesting projects. It is mainly thanks to them that day, almost a quarter century after the Velvet Revolution that toppled the communist regime, a relatively small country like the Czech Republic has something to offer to the world.

Thanks to the decision and support of the local community, the Czech Republic has become a world leader in implementation of DNSSEC, and you see how important it is. It was mentioned in the two speeches before me.

The Czech top-level domain contains the largest number of signed domains in the world, about 37%. The Czech Republic has also been very successful in the implementation of IPv6 technology as 14% of total domains in dot cz zone have AAA records.

Another thing we give to the world is software projects, and let me mention three of them.

The first project I would like to mention is the FRED registration system, the open source software which we offer for free to the top-level domain administrators around the world. Besides the Czech Republic, it has been successfully implemented in Angola, Estonia, the Faeroe Islands, Costa Rica, and Tanzania, and with some of the emerging registers showing interest as well.

Another project, not directly related to the domain world but also very important, is the BIRD Internet routing daemon. This software is currently the most widely deployed -- represented software in the route servers in the Internet exchange points around the world, so we can say that many packets traveling through today's Internet find the right path because of this software project.

And last, but not least, one of the newest additions to the authoritative DNS server called Knot DNS, which provides one of the highest performance of all open source DNS servers employed to date. Using

these and other products, cz.nic aids the Internet community not only at home but also in other countries, both developing and developed.

Our contribution to the refinement of the Internet environment also includes the operation of the national CSIRT security team and our support to projects implemented in cooperation with our government. No consideration is claimed for these projects. Our wish is to create a freer, more open, and user-friendlier Internet, and to enhance the prestige of our small country and the people who live here.

I would like to conclude my speech with a special acknowledgment. Given the fact that the Prague meeting is the last meeting for Mr. Rod Beckstrom in his position, I would like to take this opportunity and thank him for his three years work as CEO and the president of ICANN.

Thank you very much, Rod. You put a lot of energy into the community.

[Applause]

And naturally, I would like to wish Fadi Chehade, his successor, a smooth transition and continuation of the great success ICANN has had so far.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear guests, I believe that this meeting will not only help you gain new information but also get to know the culture and traditions of this small and very hospitable country. It is a great honor for me and my organization to be a host for this event. I wish you many stimulating and fruitful discussions at the different meetings to be held here, and I also wish you a pleasant stay in our city.

Prague is called "magical" for a good reason, and I hope this special quality will color your experience here in this beautiful time of the year. Thank you for coming and thank you for your attention.

[Applause]

DR. STEVE CROCKER: Is he a great guy or what? I've had the pleasure of spending some good times with him over the past several years, and as you now see, in addition to stellar leadership and guidance of cz.nic and participation in the Internet community overall, he's a charming and delightful guy and I'm pleased to call him my friend. Thank you, Ondrej.

It is now a great pleasure, indeed, to welcome Fadi Chehade to the stage here, to have him say a few words.

Let me ask you to be kind. It's not yet time to give him the full growing.

We have worked very long and hard, we went into great depth of this during the press conference Friday and introduced him formally there, but many of you were in transit and it's time to hear once again from Fadi Chehade.

[Applause]

MR. FADI CHEHADE: Thank you, Steve. And I add my thanks also to Minister Kuba and to Ondrej Filip for the great welcome for our hosts here. Thank you. And special thanks to Rod who has graciously welcomed me into this community. Thank you, Rod.

I think many of you want to know who am I. I have met as many of you as I could over the last two days, shook many hands; but many people don't know me. I'm new to the ICANN community. So let me start by sharing some things about me.

Of course, I have watched with a smile the newspaper reports over the last two days since my announcement. The Lebanese claim "a Lebanese is now leading ICANN." The Egyptians have an article "An Egyptian is heading ICANN." In the U.S., "an American is heading ICANN." So I'm watching all of this and you might be saying: Who is this guy?

And really being American or being Egyptian or being Lebanese, this is just my identity card. What you want to know is what is my identity, not my identity card.

And as the great author Amin Maalouf wrote is: Your identity is really what you have done. It is a collection of all the things you have done in your journey. So if you want to know my identity for those of you from different parts of the world saying: Is this another American running this? Is this the Arab Spring coming to lead ICANN? What is going on here? I think you just read where I've been, and that will tell you who I am.

So my identity is within me, and I will bring everything I've done to the service of ICANN. That's the most important part. But in practice, I was -- I'm born of Egyptian parents who moved around the world. They lived in. They lived in Addis Ababa and in Sudan a little bit and then in Cairo and then moved to Beirut, and that's where I was born.

I grew up in Beirut in a very French part of Beirut. So even as a child, the little nuns made sure that I spoke French till noon. And if I spoke Arabic in the morning, I was going to be sent to the room and put some milk in my ears and the mice will come. So we only spoke French till noon.

And then in the afternoon, I became completely Arabic. I couldn't speak French. So even then my identity was already being formed, and I would go home and I have Egyptian parents who were from a minority of Coptic Christians in Egypt that had left Egypt in the 1940s. So this experience and the experience of growing up in a war-torn country where I had to learn obviously to lose everything, to lose friends, to lose what I grew up with and being whisked out of Beirut during a very difficult time. My dad found out that some of my friends were telling me how to use guns at the age of 13, so supposedly I could defend our little city.

And so he put me on a little lorry and shipped me to Damascus and said don't come back, and I actually didn't. I came in and out back to Beirut, but the war was still going on until, as you know, quite late.

And then I frankly want to tell you this because many people look at this experience and say how horrible. I look at it and say how lucky, how lucky to have had this experience to learn what is important at this age and to grow up and go to the United States and embrace a brand-new culture.

I arrived to the U.S., I did not speak English. I was 18, and my first job was to peel onions. I did that for seven months. It was remarkable. Try to do that for three days.

[Laughter]

It's painful but it taught me many things. And I did go to school to learn English at the time and grew from that experience to learn of the generosity of the world. An alone young man in a place of linguistic limitations, grow up and so many people supporting me, so many people helping me.

I was talking yesterday to someone here who used to be at Bell Labs, a place I stopped by along the way. And I shared with her how AT&T covered all my expenses to go to Stanford University and paid my salary while I was there and didn't ask me to come back and work for them. They said, you know, just go do the right thing and when you finish and you gain this knowledge, use it well.

This is remarkable. This is the generosity that I will bring and I have brought to every endeavor that I took.

And I think this community has been nothing but generous to the world. What you give the world and the Internet is an amazing gift. I mentioned in the press conference that the Internet has been at the basis of every success I made in business, and I have never had anyone show up at my door and say, "Oh, we enabled your last business, we need a percentage of what you did. We enabled this next business you are about to build." No one asked me for anything.

My mother who's 87 and living with me had never used a typewriter all her life. We got her a iPad. And she now is connected to all the people that she has left from Addis Ababa all the way to Los Angeles over 50 years, all enabled by the Internet.

This great gift of watching today in Cairo, my fellow Egyptians celebrate a new President, enabled by the great power of the Internet that was available to them to tell the world what they're feeling. These are all gifts. They're gifts and we cannot frankly overblow this, but it is critical and it is important and it must remain the way it is, a gift to all people. It is the greatest public gift.

And, lastly, I want to mention something. Along my little journey I had the privilege in 1998 to start RosettaNet. For those of you who are not familiar with RosettaNet, RosettaNet was a multistakeholder standards body. I didn't know the world "multistakeholder" then, but that's what it is. And I brought together the whole I.T. sector.

And if any of you here have tried to get Oracle, SAP, Microsoft and a few -- and IBM, and HP to sit around in a room and agree on what kind of coffee to have, you would know getting 28 of the leading ICT companies in the world to agree on standards that define how their business processes work was not easy.

In fact, everyone I told I was going to do this told me that I should check my head, that this would not be possible.

Within 40 days, the 28 leading companies of the ICT sector worldwide, not just in the U.S., were sitting around a table and building RosettaNet.

And just as a small note here, Rosetta is the stone that was found in Egypt a couple hundred years ago by Napoleon's Armies. For those of you who may have visited the British museum in London and have seen it, you know that the Rosetta Stone has three languages on it. And this is very important. It is not about creating a single language. We all

know what happened to Esperanto. It is about a stone that enables understanding between languages. In a way, this is the message.

Neither ICANN or RosettaNet could have imposed any one way to do things and any one country's view of things. It is about an understanding. It is about how we come together to listen to each other and build things together. This is the symbol of the Rosetta Stone.

Now, with this I think I should get back to my note, otherwise we'll know too much about me. And I want to tell you a little bit more about my values and what drives me.

I mentioned this in the press conference, and I'm going to repeat this. I am driven by building consensus. It is the reason I am here today. There is no other reason. I love doing this, bringing communities that on the face of it could never be brought together. To agree on common things is exactly what I strive to do. I do it not just here, I do it in my community, in my church and also in my home, in my family. This is what drives me.

And I think this is foundational for the multistakeholder environment. If we do not start with this, we will only deliver words. We will not do it.

And I am all about inclusion, and inclusion starts by stepping out of the organization and looking at it from the outside, not being inside and seeing everything our way. So the first thing we need to do, and I will do, is I will step outside and look from the outside in and listen and include everyone that needs to be brought into ICANN from the beginning, from day one. This will be in my DNA, in how I will work.

Now, those of you who appreciate the multistakeholder model would say this is much harder. It is a lot easier, there are other easier ways to do things. Yes, this is not easy. This is going to require patience and hard work. But, frankly, it yields a much richer value to everybody when we do it. So it is harder, but we will do it.

I come -- besides RosettaNet and all my personal endeavors in the non-profit world, I come from a business mind-set which says the decisions must be made clearly, deliberately and in a strong approach. I will do this with a team. I'm not known to make decisions on my own. In fact, I've been reproached about that.

I like to involve the whole community to listen, then a strong team to help me arrive to the right conclusions. And then I will present these to the community, and I will manage the staff with a very strong decision-making model from the beginning. And we need that today. We have a lot of work ahead.

I care much more about getting things done than about figuring out who should get the credit. We will focus on getting things done, and this is what we need to do today.

And, finally, I want to tell you that mutual understanding is an area that I will invest a lot of time in. I saw yesterday the GAC meeting and how the dialogue can actually get us all much closer to understanding what is worrying us. I shared with some of the members of the GAC after the meeting my understanding, my listening as to what's happening in that room and what are their worries. And I will do the same with the GNSO and all the other SO and AC groups. Mutual listening and understanding is fundamental to my values.

I'm new to all of this, and today you will not get many exact, specific roadmap items from me. By Toronto I will be ready, and I will spend the next three months getting ready.

But I will tell you, there are two things that I must bring up today that are very important from what I've seen.

The first, ICANN is an international organization and we must strive to make it international. And that's not dressing. That is not an office in another country. That is not that I speak four languages.

Being international is from inside out. It's understanding from the ground up how other cultures think, how other people manage, and how we should all be understanding that not all of us have the same access. I spent time yesterday with the African delegation, with the Latin American delegation. I heard them and I felt their yearning to be reached. And I will spend time doing this. This is important.

And I will ensure that our people see it from the inside out as an international endeavor. It is who I am. Just look at my background. Just look at my confused identity, if you may call it, although I don't find it confused. I simply find it broad, and I find it to be encompassing rather than limited to an identity card.

And we will do the same at ICANN. So we will integrate everything in our daily work to make it international from day one.

Second thing, all the things I could say are meaningless if ICANN does not operate with excellence. It is all meaningless. People, process, systems. Fortunately or unfortunately I was also trained at IBM and at Bell Labs. You put these things together and you do them calmly,

steadfastly, with a lot of precision and we will deliver. We cannot be expected to do less than the commercial world. We must be expected to do five times better, ten times better than the commercial world. This is critical to who we are.

So technical excellence, people excellence, contract management excellence. I didn't learn that frankly until I got to IBM when I found out that the contract management department is larger than the contract-making department. And I said, Why? And they said because most people don't manage their contracts. You got to spend time managing.

Now, I know all these things are in place today at ICANN. But ICANN is experiencing a major change and a major expansion. So it's very important that I work with my colleague Akram to scale all these things and to make them happen and to ensure that no one in the community is doubting the operational quality and excellence of what is being delivered at ICANN every day.

[Applause]

Thank you. Look, these are times of great change for the ICANN community. The very fact that I'm here, someone who did not grow up in the ICANN community, that's change. But I do have the background. The Internet has been every part of what I've done, and I have the technical background. I used to teach computer science.

So I will bring all my qualities to the fore, and I will work with this superb team that I met in the last few days to actually make sure that this change doesn't bring us to our knees but, rather, it becomes a moment of greatness for us.

But in doing that and in doing it in a steadfast, structured way, we cannot become a fortress. ICANN cannot become a fortress. ICANN must become an oasis, a place that people see and come to because it works, because it makes sense, because it's efficient.

And an oasis also because ICANN is part of an ecosystem. We're not alone. We don't run the Internet, in case anybody thought we did. We're a part of an ecosystem of companies, of institutions, of fora that make this whole enterprise work, this sacred enterprise that has brought so much to people. You heard Ondrej speak about what it has done to them.

All of you know what it has done to your lives. So we have to keep ICANN as an oasis, and that I hope is what I'm remembered by when one day I pass the baton hopefully as graciously as Rod to the next person, that we open -- we keep ICANN open just as it is today and have it become an attractive place.

The multistakeholder model is also our responsibility. People need to look at it and copy it. We need to be a model of that.

Finally, I'd like to really thank the members of the board of directors for their trust in me, for what they've asked me to do here. I will do everything I can to live up to the trust you put in me, every one of you. Thank you.

And for those of you who -- because Steve was brief with his remarks about the work they did, the amount of rigor that was put in selecting this candidate in front of you is remarkable, remarkable. The commitment, the passion that the board members put to select me --

and I'm very humbled by this, extremely humbled by this -- I will approach this role with the same humility every day until we pass the baton to the next leader.

Secondly, I want to thank the staff, those I met and those I look forward to meet for welcoming me. I'm your least -- I'm going to be hopefully the one that will help each of you become very successful at what you do. And I know how hard our staff works, and I will take care of giving you the best environment so that you can grow.

And I want to thank Akram for stepping in while I'm trying to wind down some other things. Akram, as many of you know, is a friend, is a colleague. I have the utmost confidence in his ability to do what needs to be done, not just in the next three months, but hopefully in the years ahead while he and I walk step in step to deliver the ICANN you all want.

And, finally, I want to thank my wife who's here and my family who have brought me to here.

Okay. Way forward, I will make to you three pledges today. Number one, I will listen, I will listen to all of you. We may not always agree, and we shouldn't. This is what the model is. But I will listen.

Number two, I will be very transparent, super transparent. Is there a bigger word? Extra transparent.

[Laughter]

It's very important that I remain -- This is an oasis model. I have to be very transparent.

And, lastly, I will make all my decisions for the public interest, all my decisions for the public interest. These are my pledges. Thank you.

[Applause]

DR. STEVE CROCKER: We are blessed with a sequence of superior leaders and excellent leadership: Rod, his predecessors, Fadi. And I now want to bring another excellent really main support part of the structure that keeps things going, Akram Atallah, to say a few words to you.

[Applause]

AKRAM ATALLAH: (speaking non-English language.) Bonjour. Good morning and thank you, Steve. It is a pleasure, an unexpected one at that, to address you today. Public speaking is not normally part of my duties as chief operating officer. I am honored that the board has entrusted me with this great responsibility. Thank you.

And thank you, Rod, for bringing me to ICANN and for your consistent support. It has been a wonderful experience working with you.

I know that I take on the responsibility as ICANN enters a period of major change. I have been asked to step in to ensure that during this transition, the important initiatives we have underway move forward successfully.

And this must be done while ICANN faces significant and growing political and operational pressures.

I have the benefit of having established a professional relationship with Fadi Chehade, and I can say with confidence that I respect him. This will help ensure a smooth handover as he takes on his new role.

I understand that Fadi's arrival signals a new era in ICANN's history. As we prepare for that, there are many things that must be achieved. And I intend to work with the board, the staff and the community to achieve them.

Leadership transition is not a justification for standing still. Clear initiatives include advancing the renegotiation of the Registrar Accreditation Agreement, ensuring progress in fulfilling our ATRT obligations and advancing the new gTLD evaluation process. And I recognize that the world's attention is now directed at ICANN as we launch that high-profile program.

Especially in the light of recent developments, it is critically important that the program runs smoothly and predictably. And I accept the responsibility for the success of the new gTLD program and other important initiatives lies with me.

We have completed the gTLD application period with some bumps along the way, to be sure, and now the evaluation period has begun. Objectivity, thoroughness, transparency and professionalism in its implementation are our top priorities.

There are pressures on all of us, but there are also opportunities to improve ICANN and move us forward. This will include continuing to improve the professionalization and the internationalization of our staff,

offices and internal processes which will continue during my brief tenure as CEO.

Our staff has worked incredibly hard in recent months to launch the new gTLD program while carrying on many other important priorities. I hope that efforts and personal sacrifices are recognized and appreciated by this community.

I hope that my time in this interim position will be a stepping stone to a period of long-term stability and productivity. I know that I will hold some very precious and fragile commodities in my hands. They are ICANN's missions, its goals, its projects, its people and its reputation. I take this responsibility very seriously.

The multistakeholder is our core philosophy. It differentiates us from all other organizations, and you, our volunteers, are its engine.

I am committed to our common success, and I ask for your help and support as I undertake this transitional role. I hope to maintain close working relationships with you as individuals and as the community throughout my time as interim CEO and far beyond.

So I am ready to take on this role, and rest assured, I will be equally ready to hand it back when the time comes.

[Laughter]

Thank you very much.

[Applause]

DR. STEVE CROCKER: We are in good hands.

And with that, I -- it is a pleasure to welcome Rod Beckstrom to the stage here to tell us all of the things that have happened and the vision for the future, and to hear once again from yet another visionary and great leader. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. ROD BECKSTROM: It's a great pleasure to be here with all of you.

When I first addressed this group in Sydney in 2009 when I was appointed, you might remember the two things that I spoke about in that acceptance speech.

I talked about two things: Cacophony and symphony. And I said that when you look at all the activity in the ICANN community, within the individual stakeholder groups or across them, you see tremendous amounts of activity and documents and comments and replies and edits and negotiations and debates that some even call perpetual debates, and you can hear a lot of noise.

But if you rise above that and look at what comes out of that rich process of so many parties sharing their views, you might also hear a symphony.

And I think in the last three years, we've really made some pretty good music together.

Maybe it hasn't been a symphony, but at a minimum it's been some really good jazz.

And of course on our Wednesday nights -- Tuesdays and Wednesdays we also now enjoy music night. So that's been a -- it's been an exciting process and an exciting time and an exciting road.

And, you know, how do we describe to the world what we do?

One of my favorite magazines has got to be that magnificent U.K. piece that's so clever, so witty, and often with such wonderful cover pages, called "The Economist."

And what does "The Economist" call us as a community? What does it call ICANN?

"Deeply unsexy."

I think that's cute and I think that's clever, with the traditional flippancy of "The Economist." But it is hard to understand ICANN from the outside, but inside there's just tremendous richness.

And what I'd like to talk about today is what I've done here.

Now, my job as CEO -- and the mantle will soon be moving -- is to get things done. And I did. That's why I came here to help transform this organization, and working together I think we scored some very significant accomplishments.

And particularly I'd like to look at three areas.

Look at how we overhauled the organization.

Secondly, how we opened up and transformed the DNS.

And thirdly, how we further internationalized the organization.

When I came here, a lot of good work had been done, and I have a lot of respect for Mike Roberts, Stuart Lynn, Paul Twomey, and all the previous CEOs and staff in this organization who worked tirelessly to build ICANN from nothing, from zero, in 1998 to what I inherited.

But it was an organization that was very much strained at its size, and it had grown so quickly that there weren't always clear lines of separation in terms of the role of board, staff, and community, because there almost are no lines in many cases in the policymaking process when there's so much debate and dialogue and editing and reversion going on. And that's fine.

But when it comes to execution and operations, there have to be clear lines.

Think alone of the compliance function.

The ICANN staff has to implement compliance. Compliance is not a popularity contest, okay? And it's not an open process. The definition of the policies is, but not the execution.

So what we focused on in many cases was clarifying roles, and there was a word that had to be used quite frequently, and that word was -- and I mentioned it to the board when the board brought me on -- was the word "no."

No, we can't do that and everything else. We've got to make a tradeoff. We either stick with our plans and hold the line or we change the plans but then we extend our time frames.

Single-character, you know, TLDs as one of hundreds of examples.

So there was a lot of changes in how we ran the processes as well as the internal meetings we had, the systems that we -- that we brought into play.

So every major software system in ICANN has been upgraded in the last three years.

The finance and accounting system. The intranet that replaced dozens of separate disparate pieces we had internally. The external Internet and Web page that you now use, so many of you, in the community. The root zone management system, the first in ICANN's history to bring more tight control around the root zone process for quality and security.

These have all been done -- every single major system has been replaced. Every major facility has been upgraded to a Class A high-technology facility as of last week.

New offices in Palo Alto, Los Angeles, Playa Vista, Brussels, and D.C., uplifting the infrastructure to support our great staff and the great members of the community and all the work that they do.

And the goal of all that, of course, was simply to drive things forward and to make the initiatives happen.

So let's look at some of that progress in opening up and transforming the DNS. And of course we all know, because you laid down this vision many years ago, that the goal of that domain name system is to be unified and open globally. And I think we made very good progress.

Certainly we managed a hundred percent perfect uptime of the combined overall root server system and a hundred percent accuracy in the IANA operations.

We accomplished a lot as well in terms of opening it up for the people of the world. When we met in November of 2009 in Korea, you approved the internationalized domain names that many people in this room helped to create from scratch.

Those IDNs are now in the root of the Internet. More than 30 representing more than 20 different country code operations.

Now, what does that mean to you and me? Some of us don't use Chinese characters or Japanese characters, or Devanagari, okay? But half the world does. Half the users of the Internet today -- over a billion -- do not use a Latin script in their first language. And as the Internet moves from around 2 1/2 billion users today to 3, 3 1/2, 4, 4 1/2, 5 billion users, there will be many more that need those internationalized domain names. And together, we've done that.

And in doing so, we've enhanced the unity of the domain name system and the Internet.

And then of course the next year we added DNSSEC to the root of the Internet, the work that cryptographically Dr. Crocker and so many others had helped to develop that was important for adding security, a

necessary trust anchor in the Internet that's probably going to be used for decades to come, and as we heard today, the Czechs are doing an excellent job of implementing.

The DNSSEC rooted the Internet in a way to provide security and now we're all working on its adoption. That was another big move.

And then finally, the effort that so many of you have been working on for up to 7 years, and that is the new generic top-level domain program, opening up the right of the dot of the Internet more broadly than has ever been done in history.

And I remember when I first came to ICANN, my first meeting in Seoul. I was on an escalator with one of the leaders of the GNSO, and he asked me, he said, "Do you think you're ever going to be able to get new gTLDs to actually happen in this organization?"

And my answer was, "You bet. You got the right man." I said, "I don't -- I don't care what it's going to take but it's been approved as policy. It's been approved by the board. My job is to help lead and deliver the results. And we will get it done. Doesn't matter how long it takes. We're going to lay it down. We'll do a project plan." Which we did and which we stuck to, and delivered with the exciting reveal that just happened on June the 13th, with 1,930 names included.

What remarkable progress for the domain name system.

So you look at IDNs, you look at DNSSEC, you look at this new gTLD program. We have fundamentally opened up and transformed the domain name system these last three years, through your incredible

efforts, through staff's incredibly hard efforts, through the board's incredibly great efforts.

So it's a lot of change.

The third thing that we can look at and that I'm very excited about is the further internationalization of the organization.

Now, it's always been international, but it continues to grow and become more international, and to me that was critical. I felt when I came in that this organization was too western-focused, too focused on issues in North America and Europe, for example, and it needed to consider the rest of the world.

Today, half of the users of the Internet are in Asia alone, and there's many in Africa and Latin America as well, and it's important that we focus on that.

So what did we do?

Well, my first day on the job, I was given a blank sheet of paper and I was told that the -- the memorandum of understanding with the Department of Commerce of the U.S. Government was not going to be renewed by ICANN. And I was told, "You better come up with something better and you have to get it done in 90 days because the MoU is going to expire."

Together we worked and we created the Affirmation of Commitments, the affirmation which makes ICANN so much more international constitutionally or contractually with what we have.

And look at the great work of the three review teams that have already finished or nearly finished their work: The ATRT team, the WHOIS team, the security stability resilience team.

These teams are international, with people from the private sector, from government, from civil society, from all over the world.

So we internationalized ICANN with the Affirmation of Commitments very fundamentally and you have executed.

Secondly, you look at the staff. When I came in, many people didn't understand when I said, "I want every employee, every new person we add in staff, should be multilingual fluent. Multilingual fluent. I don't care where in the world they're from but they need to be multilingual fluent."

People would say, "Why? Why does that matter for someone who is just in the technical shop? Why does that matter for someone who is a receptionist? Why does that -- you know, sure that makes sense in the field organization or somewhere else."

And I said, "It's cultural. We need to be of the world. We need to reflect the world. And we have to do it with our people."

Approximately 75% of every staff member we've hired since I came is multilingual fluent.

And it's shifted the culture of ICANN internally and when you walk down the halls even in Los Angeles, you're very likely to hear Tagalog spoken or Spanish or French or any number of languages, and that's an important step.

On the executive management team, when I came, there was one or two instances of a foreign language fluency on the entire executive team.

Today there are nine. Nine instances of foreign language fluency. And quite a number of people that were born in the non-English speaking world.

That's important. That internationalizes us, helps us understand the views of the world.

Look at expansion in our community and the growth. The GAC, many new countries. Much -- much more than 110 countries today advise the board of directors of ICANN. It's grown.

The ccNSO has grown by more than 30 new country code members in the last three years.

The ALAC has added more than 30 chapters around the world, including many new -- new countries and cities. And the GNSO participation has expanded as well.

The other thing we tried to focus on was the developing countries and their needs, right?

We passed, for the first time in history, a needy applicant support program to provide support to them under the new gTLD program. We focused on activities and events in developing countries, and there's one in particular that I want to mention that I personally focused on as CEO, and that is China.

I focused on China.

The reason I did that is 25% of the Internet users in the world today are from China. Half are from Asia. And I had lovely visits to India as well, to our friends and colleagues there. And to dozens of countries I went to.

But I decided to focus on China, because when I looked at our ICANN community, I said, "We don't have near 25% representation of 25% of the Internet users in the world, and where that number is even expanding."

And so there's a number of moves that we made. From the frequent visits -- I think I was in Beijing as -- as -- more times than I was in Brussels in this position, and that was a change. And we worked together successfully on many different projects.

The Chinese government participated in the ATRT and hosted an ATRT meeting in Beijing. This was excellent engagement and process.

We worked together on internationalized domain names, and in particular, one of the toughest -- one of the greatest achievements of our board the last three years, out of many, was the incredible efforts put in to create synchronized TLDs to address the issues of Chinese-speaking people in three different regions in Asia. That was an intensive effort, it was extremely difficult, but we got it done.

And it didn't mean much to some of us who don't use Chinese as a language, but it means a lot to them, and their involvement and their support and technical expertise were truly, truly impressive.

We hosted events for the nominations committee -- or to support the nominations committee with the Internet Society of China, to help recruit more people into ICANN leadership.

And then of course we worked on the IDN variants project. That was done in six centers around the world, and one of the main centers was China, which was extremely active and engaged.

And I have to say we have been so warmly received and supported by the excellent leadership in the Internet community in China, in the government, in the private sector, and in civil society.

And I'm a changed person for it. I feel so grateful, and I've developed an enormous affection for China.

The other thing that happened is of course we promoted a vice president, a very senior technical expert and respected in government globally as well as in China, who has joined us as the VP of Asia, joining another strong team of regional VPs which also internationalizes the organization.

Because each region deserves to have that level of representation inside ICANN, to be able to deal with senior people and corporations and governments and all the policymaking processes.

But these changes had an impact, and this is -- and the growing engagement of the Chinese community and support for what we've done and the support for ICANN was evidenced on December 8th when we announced the vice president in China. The announcement was made by Minister Wong of the State Council Information Office. And his words were, "This new vice president is now a bridge from China and

Asia to ICANN and the world." And to have such significant support from a top-level leader -- that announcement, by the way, appeared guess how many times on the Internet now. 180,000.

In Chinese language.

It's a very significant announcement and it changes our organization. And again, it's only part of the whole global picture of who we are, but it's something I took on to help transform this organization and ensure its future as a truly multistakeholder organization with deep participation from all cultures and all people in this world.

Now, the last note on internationalization. I think we can all remember -- and it was a lot of fun -- when we were in Senegal, right? So in the last three years, we've had a number of sitting and former heads of state speak to us but the speech by President Wade in Senegal was particularly interesting.

Why? You may remember. Because he spoke to us addressing ICANN policy issues item by item.

Imagine that. A head of state engaging with ICANN in his speech, in his presentation and dialogue, discussing our policy issues.

And this was a great step forward and wonderful to see it from a leader in Africa.

Now, I'm not going to stand here and tell you everything was perfect.

We certainly know it was not. And it can't be in an organization that's grown. Incidentally, when I came, ICANN had $57 million of funds under management. Today, $444 million. We have seen real growth.

This is a large and complex program that we're running with new gTLDs. It's a transformation and it's a significant change.

And as an example of our imperfections is we had the glitch in the application software that we disclosed on April 12th and shared the information we had about it. It was an extremely difficult process internally. It was exhausting.

The first thing I did as the CEO is form a crisis management team that began to meet its first time within a couple of hours, and then we began to meet every day. About 12 to 15 of us. Sometimes it was an hour, sometimes it was two or three. Every day.

Starting, on Saturdays and Sundays as well, and then after some period of time, it became every weekday.

But it was exhausting and excruciating to figure out the dimensions of what could have happened because of one tiny software glitch, what users could have seen what usernames, what users could have seen what filenames, and we scrubbed these enormous amounts of data -- I think 500 gigabytes of data -- to figure out who had seen what when.

And then once we figured all that out, of course as you know, we shared that with you, the applicants, because that was our job was to focus on the applicants. Share with the world what was going on, but focus on the applicants.

But it's one of the most exhausting management processes I've ever been through, and for the organization.

We learned a lot of skills on it. We had a lot of expertise. We hired a -- a nationally and internationally respected crisis management leader as part of the team. We hired world-class communication experts as part of the team. And those cryptic little messages that you'd see coming out every day? You can't even imagine how many hours were put into those documents and those statements, to make sure they were precisely accurate and appropriate. And -- but we worked through it.

These things will happen in any organization, in a growing organization. We worked through it.

So that's a summary.

I think those are the three areas that we really made progress, again.

And I want to talk now about where we're going, so let's talk about who's going to be taking the reins here, and so first I want to address Akram.

Habibi, it has been such an incredible opportunity to work together these last few years. You are so capable, so talented, you have such great integrity, and you are universally respected within the organization, and it gives me enormous pride as the CEO and a member of the management team that chose you to see you stepping up and taking this role, and ICANN's fortunate to have you, and I think you know you have my hundred percent support.

Fadi, I am so happy you are coming here.

You are a great man. You have a strong past. You have accomplished so much in business, technology, and even up from the -- you know, the

ration into riches. Everything you've done, very impressive. And the work with the open source and standards community is a fantastic background.

And what's great about both of these next leaders is they were both born as nonnative English speakers, and they're the first CEOs in ICANN to do that. Number 5 and Number 6 if my math is right up here right now.

But that is a great sign of change and transformation in ICANN.

And so Fadi, I want to let you know, as I've told you privately as well, you have my full support and I want to see you exceed -- succeed in every way, and I want to ask all of you, will you support this man? Will you support Fadi? Yes. Excellent.

[Applause]

And I know through our shared excellent relationship with Akram, I think it brings a really strength of transition in the organization, so I'm very pleased about that.

And really, I want to thank all of you. All of you in the community. All of you on the board.

Steve, Bruce, all of you in the staff who have worked so tirelessly for three years. It's just been an incredible honor to represent you and to serve this organization and to work with you.

And I also want to thank you for something special. It may not be exactly what you expect, but I want to thank you for the enduring criticism that this organization receives and its leadership receives,

because it's one of the most open, transparent, and debated policy groups and organizations in the world.

And that constant pressure, in addition to the tectonic pressure of being near one of the few things that's a connector in the Internet -- namely, the root and the address blocks -- has made me a better leader.

I have learned so much through this experience, and I really am grateful for that, and for the many friendships that I've been able to make.

So I think we've made a lot of progress, and we're doing what we need to do to keep that Internet unified for mankind, because the Internet, as we know, is one of the greatest blessings on earth to mankind. It helps to unite us all. And working together, may we step forward and serve that simple mission that we share: One world, one Internet, everyone connected.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

[Applause]

Thanks. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[Applause]

Ladies and gentlemen, that concludes our welcome ceremony. We have coffee break outside at 10:30 and the next session in this room begins at 11:00 this morning and it is the update on the RAA negotiations. We'll see you back here.

Thank you.