
MARRAKECH – Welcome & President's Opening Session
Monday, March 07, 2016 – 08:30 to 09:45 WET
ICANN55 | Marrakech, Morocco

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to announce and introduce our Vice President, Global Stakeholder Engagement, Middle East, Baher Esmat.

[Applause]

BAHER ESMAT: Sabah El Khier, Bonjour, good morning.

It's my greatest pleasure to welcome you all to ICANN 55 in Marrakech, and a very warm welcome to the beautiful city of Marrakech, also known as the Red City, the land of civilization and amazing mix of Arab, African, and European culture and history.

I'd like to invite Dr. Steve Crocker, chairman of the board of ICANN, to officially inaugurate ICANN 55.

[Applause]

DR. STEPHEN CROCKER: Thank you, Baher.

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Wow! I've got an official speech which I'll cover in a minute here, but I want to say it's a real pleasure to be here. It's -- just everything, including even the weather, cooperates. It's just fantastic.

So thank you again, Baher. Your Excellencies, Minister Moulay Hafid Elalamy, Minister of Industry, Trade, Investment and Digital Economy of Morocco, distinguished ministers and heads of delegations of guest countries, secretary-generals of international and regional organizations, president of the Marrakech region, His Excellency Ahmed Akhchichine, the Wali -- and the Wali of Marrakech. Thank you all.

His Excellency, Mohamed Moufakir -- sorry about that -- distinguished guests and our dear friends and colleagues in the ICANN ISTAR community, ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to welcome you all to ICANN 55, and particularly to this beautiful city of Marrakech and welcome -- and express our sincere gratitude for His Majesty King Mohammed IV of the Kingdom of Morocco for his patronage for our ICANN 55 meeting this week.

This reflects on the high priority the Kingdom of Morocco places on the development of information and communications technology, and I'm glad to welcome you all in Marrakech.

I would also like to thank our host, His Excellency Moulay Hafid Elalamy, and his distinguished colleagues, along with Director

General Azdine El Mountassir Billah -- sorry -- and the National Telecoms Authority and the local organizing committee for these excellent hosting facilities.

I would also like to mention our ICANN stakeholders in Morocco who have been helpful in the preparation of this event. Our presence today in such high numbers of governments, civil society, and business attendees reflect our sincere commitment to Africa and to the wider developing countries, since this meeting comes at the crossroads of an historical moment of the future of governance structures for ICANN.

This high-level government meeting will be the largest of its type that ICANN has ever hosted. More than 170 ministers and high-level government representatives are attending.

I also want to express my appreciation to our very gracious hosts. Without their hard work and long hours, we would not be here now. I have to tell you that in my prior life, I have spent similar kind of work putting meetings together and it is an extraordinary amount of effort over a very long period of time. It takes a lot to organize these meetings, as I've said, and I want to recognize one person in particular who has been a driving force in making ICANN 55 come together, our friend Aziz Hilali, president of the Mediterranean Federation of Internet Associations.

[Applause]

Where is Aziz? Stand up. Stand up, turn around.

[Applause]

I gather from this that Aziz has personally paid each of you to show up here.

[Laughter]

It's been a decade -- 10 years -- since ICANN last held a meeting in this beautiful city, and it's great to be back.

For those of you who know me, I generally try to avoid words like "historic" or "momentous," but in the case of ICANN 55, these have the potential of ringing true.

What happens in the coming week could well mark a significant point in ICANN's history, and that history is really being written by you.

I'm referencing, of course, the IANA stewardship transition proposal and the parallel one to enhance ICANN's accountability, which will, I believe, be sent to the U.S. government at the conclusion of this week, if everything comes together as planned.

When that occurs, it will take us to the final leg of a journey that was first envisioned when ICANN was formed in 1998.

That work has -- the work that has gone into these proposals is nothing short of remarkable -- other words have sometimes been used -- and a testament to the time and commitment of the community.

Let me give you some numbers since, at heart, we really are a technical coordination body.

What are the numbers? 434 meetings and calls, over 32,000 mailing list exchanges, and more than 720 working hours.

For those of you who are not into numbers, the translation is extremely simple: We're exhausted.

[Laughter]

So let me ask that you join me in acknowledging the people who have made this happen. That is, yourselves. So with that, a big applause for everybody here and for everybody around the world.

[Applause]

Now, I know all of you have been following the process in exquisite detail, but for those few who haven't, we have a labyrinth of processes related to how these proposals are put

together, and at the moment, the accountability proposal has been delivered by the CCWG, the cross-community working group on accountability, and the chartering organizations are taking a very close look at it. At last count, I saw that three of the six chartering organizations had signed off on it, and the work that is underway fervently and urgently yesterday, today, tomorrow, and so forth will be the remainder of the process. And as chairman of the board, I'm looking forward very much to having an acceptance and for the board to express its approval toward the end of this week.

So that will be, from my point of view, the most important thing that's going to happen here.

Of course that process of bringing the proposals up from the community and bringing together is the first step, not the last step, in a process.

Once these proposals are in our hands, we will forward them to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce, and we hope that NTIA will find these proposals acceptable and in accordance with the bold and very sensible ground rules that NTIA announced almost exactly two years ago, on the 14th of March in 2014.

That's when NTIA asked ICANN to convene the international global Internet community to formulate transition proposals.

Let me make clear that the board fully expects to endorse these proposals and forward them without delay and with our complete commitment to not only the acceptance of the proposals but to the rapid implementation of them.

[Applause]

These proposals will usher in a new era of independence and global accountability of ICANN. Let me emphasize that we're not done yet. This is -- will be an extremely important juncture at this meeting, and then we still have quite a lot of time and work that will go on in multiple quarters, including, of course, within the U.S. government.

When all of that is complete, the real transition will have taken place.

So with all of that, it's now my great honor to introduce Morocco's Minister of Industry, Trade, Investment, Digital Economy, Mr. Moulay Hafid Elalamy, who did not spare any efforts to make our meeting successful. This is a truly great man of many accomplishments and it's been my pleasure to meet with him more than once here, and I look forward to doing so many times in the future.

[Applause]

MOULAY HAFID ELALAMY: Mr. Ministers, Mr. President Steve Crocker, Mr. President Fadi Chehade, Your Excellencies, distinguished members of ICANN, ladies and gentlemen, I have the great pleasure and honor to be here this morning amongst you to inaugurate the work that has been done or that is being done by ICANN 55.

This event is under the high patronage of Mohammed IV, our king -- may God help him -- that has special interest for our community as far as the international political governance of the Internet.

What I would like to do first is to welcome all of you in the name of our kingdom, and I would like to also express my joy to welcome you here in Marrakech, a city where we have a great history, we are open to the future, and for the second time we are welcoming you. We are welcoming this ICANN meeting.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the entire ICANN community for having chosen Morocco. Our country is a country that welcomes people that is a peaceful country, a land of peace. Your choice is a testament to stability, the stability that you can find in our kingdom.

I believe that Internet is a resource for the growth, the economic growth, of countries. Connectivity that today connects more than 3 billion individuals, impressive technological process, concentration of revenues, more than 90% for developed countries, are factors that means -- that mean that Internet governance is at the heart of international policies.

I have -- it is very interesting to remind you that this meeting is being convened among several platforms. Especially the international governance forum. The last edition of that forum was put together in Brazil in nineteen ninety- -- in 2005, as well as the U.N. nations that reviewed the results of this world forum.

This great meeting in Marrakech coincides with the last leg, the final leg, of the process in order to get to a transition plan of the governance model of the world system of Internet resources in order to increase transparency as well as accountability. This initiative is, without any doubt, the illustration of opening up the Internet. We need to respect cultural diversity as well as linguistic diversity, especially as far as developing countries are concerned. The negotiation process in which all stakeholders, DNS stakeholders, civil society, governments, as well as the scientific and technical community have committed ever since 2014, this is not just a game. However, it is important that all parties are involved. I believe it is important that we answer the prerequisites of the transition.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Kingdom of Morocco started very early on to adhere to the ICANN, and we recognize that progress were made, that transparency has been improved in order to consolidate the multistakeholder model of the Internet.

Morocco also shares the expectations of governments as far as the GAC is concerned, the way that it exercises its responsibilities in order to make sure that a public Internet might be taken into account within the transition process that is occurring as we speak.

As far as transparency and accountability, this illustrates real concerns. The work that has been accomplished is important and it allows all stakeholders to move forward peacefully and become more inclusive. We are convinced that combining efforts of all stakeholders during this transition process is key in order to make sure that this process comes to fruition by March, when the ICANN will need to validate a complete proposal for the transition plan.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me take a few minutes of your precious time in order to introduce you to the information and technology sector in Morocco.

In Morocco, we are aware that information technologies, and in particular the Internet, constitute a main motor of competitiveness. Not only for the private sector but as well for the public sector. It

is a very efficient lever for the administration of the job market as well as to improve the lives of citizens.

We have a clear desire in our country to adopt -- and we have done so ever since the '90s -- to work on public/private partnerships and to improve the business environment.

Our policy met several roadmaps. We have improved growth within our society. This means that we have now have better digital infrastructures. The development of an information technology sector means that we started protecting also Internet users' privacy.

Recently, in Morocco, we started a new modernization programming in order to improve our communications infrastructure. It is called the national plan for high and low bandwidth. Our objective is to get in the short-term 65% of our population to connect all of them to a high bandwidth, and 50% of public establishments will be connected to a medium bandwidth. And we would like to also get to the entire population being connected to this bandwidth.

We are finalizing with our partners a new strategy with several points. First of all, increase digital access in Morocco; make sure that we improve as far as governance and digital competencies.

Ladies and gentlemen, as many of you, we have learned with great surprise the announcement that Fadi Chehade was going to leave ICANN right after this 55th meeting.

However, I would like to congratulate him for his courage, for the decisions that he made after the work -- the incredible amount of work that he did in order to get to this transition. I would like to congratulate him.

[Applause]

The work that was accomplished by our friend Fadi since his arrival at ICANN is really -- is really -- we have to thank him a lot with all that he did with his leadership, with his initiatives, the regional presence of ICANN, and the start of a process with more competition in our domain names. I wish him the best in his professional and personal life.

And regarding Mr. Goran Marby, I would like to congratulate him being the next President and CEO of ICANN. Mr. Marby that you know more than me is a person at a very high level who knows our ecosystem very well. His qualities are numerous, and he's going to be at the helm of ICANN and be able to have even higher success. I wish him all the best in his new mission at the head of ICANN.

Ladies and gentlemen, I don't want to finish my speech before telling you how happy we are to have you here in Morocco for your 55th meeting.

I thank you very much for your attention, and I wish you an excellent stay in Marrakech.

[Applause]

BAHER ESMAT:

Thank you, Mr. Elalamy, for your insightful speech. And thank you again for the tremendous support that you personally, your team, and the entire government of Morocco have been giving to ICANN.

I'd like now to invite to the stage Mr. Azdine El Mountassir Billah, General Director of the National Telecommunications Regulatory Agency in Morocco, ANRT.

[Applause]

AZDINE EL MOUNTASSIR BILLAH: Dear ministers, dear presidents, dear Mr. General-Secretary of the ITU, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to welcome you this 55th ICANN meeting in the Kingdom of Morocco under the patronage of the King Mohammed VI, may God help him in his beautiful city of Marrakech which is the crossroads of so many

civilizations and cultures. Our country today is very happy to have this meeting on African soil which is a young continent with a great future, the land, our land, in which we work every day for a better tomorrow.

We are very close to Europe and to the rest of the world, and we do share with the international community ideals of progress of prosperity of tolerance, of openness, and of complementarity.

In Marrakech, we are very happy to have for the second time after the 26th ICANN meeting in 2006 your 55th meeting of ICANN here in Marrakech which shows that you do trust Morocco and you enjoy Morocco.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you know, Internet and the new digital world which changes and evolves every day does represent a great space for freedom, a spirit of exchange, of sharing, and very strong resource for economic development where innovation, invention, and creation are key words.

The Web is in our life, personal, professional lives, social life, cultural life, in our private life as well as. And more and more we need to have a framework, we need to have a strong governance for the Internet. And everybody must agree with that to protect the rights of people and the rights of citizens.

We have to use the Internet. There is a lot at stake: Freedom of expression, network security, multilinguistic capabilities, and so on.

We know we have a challenge in front of us. We work at this challenge to have a new model of governance for the Internet multistakeholder model, a balanced model with the governments, civil society, companies in order to exchange more to be closer to one another and to have synergies, the necessary synergies, to go forward.

We already did a lot with everybody involved. And now we hope to do even more in Marrakech and take some strong decisions to make some compromises when needed because our hopes are very high so that Africa would be more involved in that process, for Africa to have a strong role at ICANN. We are doing a lot. We're working at it.

And I have to say, before finishing my speech, that I really thank the people that worked behind to help us out so that this meeting is a success. So much preparation was needed.

We are local host. And in the name of the ANRT, I would like to thank you and thank the team, the ANRT team, which put together part of this meeting. And I would like to thank Mr. Fadi Chehade, President and CEO of ICANN. He did so much to make sure that this organization is today a different organization with

so much enthusiasm. He wanted to come to Morocco for the 55th meeting. He wanted to come in my country. And I wish him the best.

I also wish the best to Mr. Marby who is going to be the new CEO. All the best for ICANN for the future. Good luck, and enjoy your stay in Marrakech.

[Applause]

DR. STEPHEN CROCKER: It's very moving with partners, prime movers, all over the world as exhibited and exemplified by our host here. This is what makes the Internet work. This is what makes a global community.

And it is, I think, if you share the same feelings I have, the same things that drive all of us and motivate us to be involved.

I guess I should also add a word of appreciation as well to the people that we don't name and give honorific titles to who do all the work.

I was flashing back to a time about 30 years ago when I put two years into helping organize a meeting in 1985. And the amount of work that goes in behind the scenes is absolutely incredible,

meetings all the time on a continuous basis and then holding your breath to make sure that all the pieces come together.

So a personal thanks to the hosts, to the sponsors, and to echo the words that you've just heard to all of the teams of people. And it's multitude of teams. It's not just one set of people. It's not just a small set that take care of every element of making it possible for us to get together and do the work that we have to do here today. So thank you again.

[Applause]

Well, it was mentioned that this guy named Chehade is going to leave pretty soon. I think that makes us all quite sad actually. So while we welcome in an era, we say good-bye to a man who has been instrumental in making all of this happen. It has been quite a ride, I have to say again personally.

This is Fadi Chehade's last ICANN meeting as the CEO. It's not really an understatement to say that he has transformed ICANN to a degree that no one imagined possible when he first came on board almost four years ago. And let me make that -- let me emphasize that personally. He often refers to me as his boss, which I always kind of have a smile because I don't think that it's possible to keep up with him, much less be in charge of him.

[Laughter]

But I have had the privilege of having a front-row seat and pretty good access to him even though he runs at light speed. The earliest conversations I had with him as he came on board is, "Here's the situation we're in at ICANN. We started in 1998. There's a small detail, that we have a contract with the U.S. government. See if you can do something about that."

Had no idea the kinds of things that were going to come from that. And I try to think as broadly and out of the box as I can and I still have been surprised in a very positive sense. Really, it's been extraordinary.

And that's not all. So I have a list of accomplishments which I'm obliged to go through. He oversaw the largest-ever expansion of the Domain Name System by implementing the new generic top-level domains program. Yes, that had been in the works for several years. But the execution of it was challenging nonetheless, and we have pulled it off. And I can tell you that even though he spends almost all of his time on airplanes, he still managed to get some things done at home. And this took quite a lot of work.

He's made us a truly international organization. Instituted the concept of what we call triquarters, sort of smashing our headquarters into three, and opening up hubs in Singapore, in Istanbul, in addition to the existing Los Angeles hub. To be fair,

they are not yet totally symmetric and balanced, but we're getting there and a set of direction that I think is vital for our mindset and our operation in the coming years.

And in addition to these hubs, we have engagement centers all over the world and I expect more to come. And, yet, living within our resources, I expect it will be a balanced operation.

That takes care of the things that are happening at breakneck speed on a day-to-day basis. He also oversaw the formation of a five-year strategic plan -- excuse me -- that translates into stability and resilience for both ICANN and the DNS.

The bottom line is that he didn't just expand the organization but he oversaw its maturation.

The list of his accomplishments goes on and on, but perhaps his most valuable contribution to this organization is something that does not fit easily into a recitation like that or onto PowerPoint slides. He's brought humility and passion to ICANN in a remarkable manner and he's framed it with a sense of human decency that is simply unmatched.

What I'm talking about now is not Fadi the CEO but Fadi the man.

I'd like to show you a brief video that I believe captures Fadi the man.

[Video playing]

MR. FADI CHEHADE: There's purpose in life here at ICANN, and as you know, I mean, people live for purpose.

But it's that intersection, as the young lady asked me, between technology and policy that becomes a very important area. People like to explore cuisines or explore movies or explore literature. I think the funnest thing for me to explore is people and how to connect with them. Building bridges is really what I love to do.

Let's go. Andiamo.

It's not about me and what I have designed for that moment when I meet somebody. It's about them. It's about the person. And if I focus all my attention on them and listen and really connect to them, then I have achieved my goal and my purpose.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: There's another side of it in European court.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: He tried to reach to people as persons. He did not see us as a community just for the sake of community. He saw us as

individuals within a community. Which, for someone like me, I think is very special. So I'll miss Fadi.

DR. STEPHEN CROCKER: His poise, his ready smile, and his warmth and his total commitment to making positive things happen. Without Fadi, we wouldn't be where we are.

VINT CERF: When Fadi leaves ICANN, he leaves a much larger organization than it was when he started and he's leaving it on the brink of massive change we've all been waiting for for more than a decade, which is to break it loose from its relationship with NTIA, to become an independent organization.

MR. FADI CHEHADE: So I want to give you the assurance that all this work will be done with great care, with stability and security as our number one goal.

AKRAM ATALLAH: Fadi brought some sincerity and some hard work and very high values and ethics.

MR. FADI CHEHADE: We will speak to every community willing to listen to our multistakeholder model.

LARRY STRICKLING: I don't know how the man accomplished everything he accomplished. He always seemed to be on an airplane going somewhere else.

MR. FADI CHEHADE: I mean, I clocked, as you know, hundreds of thousands of miles on planes. It was very good. I mean, unless you guys disagree, I thought this was a home run for us.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I agree.

MR. FADI CHEHADE: When I'm in a city like D.C. or Brussels, et cetera, our amazing team, they would pack sometimes 13, 14 meetings a day for me in a city.

Okay. Thank you for allowing me to grab a quick coffee. I needed it.

[Laughter]

You may not think so, but I did.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Is your suitcase in the back?

MR. FADI CHEHADE: No. Where is my suitcase?

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: Fadi has certainly got a wicked sense of humor. I've been accused of having a wicked sense of humor. Believe me, Fadi has a very wicked sense of humor.

MR. FADI CHEHADE: Only once did I arrive to a country and I didn't find my working shoes in the bag.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Oooh. What did you do? Sandals?

[Laughter]

MR. FADI CHEHADE: No, no. I went bare feet and I explained that in my country it's a great way to honor you --

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: It's an honor. In my country, it's a blessing.

MR. FADI CHEHADE: -- to walk in bare feet --

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I hoped you clipped your nails. Your toenails.

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR: There's a little glint in his eye that you see from time to time. If you can ever get him into the "laugh out loud" situation, that is a genuine heartfelt joy and laughter that quite honestly I think no one can other than join in.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: We shared many laughs. Fadi does have a very personal side in his course of engagement which I thought makes him special.

DR. STEPHEN CROCKER: He has built an incredible team of very, very competent people and they enjoy working with each other. He has built a real team.

MR. FADI CHEHADE: The meeting will be in Marrakech? Okay.

OLIVIER CREPIN-LEBLOND: He has this -- I would say it's a middle eastern way of relating to people. You need to go and to not only speak with people but also get a better feeling of what -- what people think.

DR. STEPHEN CROCKER: Fadi, it's been a -- a really incredible trip. It has been a true pleasure and honor chairing the board that has been supporting you, watching the things that you've been able to accomplish.

MR. FADI CHEHADE: This is the thing I will miss most about ICANN. Not the travel, not all the other things. It's the people.

(speaking in a non-English language.)

People have shown me enormous kindness here at ICANN. Everybody. It's been an incredible 3 1/2, 4 years here, so none of this will be lost. It's a treasure and I will keep it, and it will keep me going for many years, and I loved it. Every minute of it. But I loved it.

[Video stops]

[Applause]

DR. STEPHEN CROCKER: There's nothing more for me to say. Fadi Chehade.

MR. FADI CHEHADE: (Speaking in a non-English language.)

-- for all representatives, Mr. Ahmed Akhchichine, the head of Marrakech, and Mr. Mohamed, Wali of Marrakech, ladies and gentlemen, and all guests, my best greetings for all of you. Welcome to all of you at ICANN 55 in Marrakech, the beautiful city.

Please allow me to express my appreciation and thankful for the king, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, and for his hospitality and for his care for ICANN 55, and -- which shows that the priorities of Moroccan kingdom to develop the technology here, and specific communications and information technology, and I'm so happy that I am welcoming all of you here in Marrakech.

I would also to thank all the hosts, the minister, Moulay Hafid Elalamy, and all his colleagues, and all our appreciation and thankful for Mr. Azdine El Mountassir, the general director of the agency of communication and for all the hospitality here in this city.

-- and it's been a successful journey that we did together. I'm almost four years into this journey that you entrusted me to join

you on and I think success was really a product of our work together.

For those of you who were with us in Prague in June 2012, I remember sharing with you that I really hope that as we work together, we build ICANN as an oasis, not as a fortress, and it happens to be that today, on my last meeting with you, we are sitting on the largest oasis in North Africa.

24,000 palm trees surround this wonderful place. And what a great symbol of the oasis that ICANN is.

For my African colleagues can tell you that an oasis is open. It has no walls. It's welcoming. It's attractive. We want to go to an oasis. It gives us life. It gives us purpose. And here we are standing on a beautiful oasis today.

Now, as I'm leaving you, I recall the quote of Gibran, Khalil Gibran, who said that the mountain is a lot clearer from the plain. So as I start stepping away and I look back at this community, I urge you to stand with me just for a moment and look at what we have. Because it's different.

I just met, coming in this morning, an ambassador who is coming here for the first time accompanying the minister from their country, and asking, "What is this? It's different. What happens here?"

So let me tell you, Madam Ambassador, what you have here.

What you have here is a group of people who volunteer their time to build a resource for everyone, and it's unique. There's nothing like it.

The magic of this community is unmatched. And when you come in, it feels different. Well, who -- how do you make decisions? What is this consensus thing? Bottom-up? All these words we use because we live here.

So like you, Madam Ambassador, I came to this community four years ago and I asked the same questions. And the answer is just marvelous. It's a model we call multistakeholder. A not very pretty word. Big word. Complex word. But it's not the word that matters; it's the spirit behind this word. The spirit of working together, making things happen for a resource today that is fueling a \$4.2 trillion economy just in the G20 countries.

A resource that when Vint Cerf and Steve Crocker and Bob Kahn and all these great engineers who gather quietly, humbly, every year in this thing called the IETF, have built, continue to build with humility, with effectiveness. This is what we do here. We actually bring together a resource that serves everyone.

And the world doesn't understand how we do it, so I tell them: Come. Look at this beautiful room. We have 1200 seated people

here and thousands more watching. These are the people who come to make the magic.

Now, I often thought what drove me. One of you in this room wrote me once a text. She knows who she is. And she asked me, "What drives you? What makes you get up every morning and keep doing this?" And I'm still doing it. I was up till 1:00 a.m. with some of you yesterday trying to advance this and make it happen.

It's purpose. And what is our purpose. What is the purpose of this organization? Well, the best answer to that is to go back to those that started this organization. And I looked at some purpose-driven organizations before.

Procter & Gamble. What do you think Procter & Gamble, the great American consumer products company, was created? Because Procter & Gamble, the two Irish boys coming off from their country to the U.S. said there are many soldiers dieing in the trenches. We need to figure out how to stop the diseases. So they made soap. Their purpose was to save the boys.

What is our purpose? Well, I came and learned with you that our purpose comes from within those who started this. And when I search for it, the best picture I had for it is Jon Postel. Jon was driven by a purpose. I'm not going to tell you what it is, but you will -- you all know what it is. You taught me what it is. I shared

with the staff in my parting meeting with them that when the war started in Lebanon, it was 1975. I was 13 years old. And my dad came home one day and he said to my mom, "Where's Fadi"? And she said, "Oh, I don't know how to explain this to you. But militias picked him up this afternoon to go learn to use weapons." And my dad went crazy. He said, "I don't want that boy to use weapons." She said, "We had no choice. They took him from the house." So he came and picked me from the camp and drove me up to the main highway between Beirut and Damascus.

And he stopped the first lorrie he found. He told them, Take my son to Damascus and put him on a one-way plane to Geneva. Get him out of here.

And I'm 13. My dad put me on this lorrie, this truck, and I had no idea where I was going. I remember looking at my dad and I said, "Where am I going? Where are you sending me? This is home." And he said, "Remember -- go and remember what you believe in. What is your purpose?" And I said, "What is it"?

And the truck is leaving, and I'm asking him an existential question. I'm 13. And he said, "I can't tell you. It's in you. It's in you."

And this community has purpose within it that was planted early by the selfless humility of the engineers who built this. Let's keep this spirit. It's magical.

I meet governments. I meet powerful people. But at the end, we are all looking for purpose.

You know, the Stanford neurosurgeon who just passed away and wrote the book that you should all read called "When Breath Becomes Air" died in his 30s. He wrote in his book that man is made to strive for a purpose. And if we don't, we become like painting a tiger without stripes.

So let's keep striving. Let's keep our purpose. Let's keep this magic. It's wonderful.

And I will take it everywhere I go. It's enriched me in ways I will never, ever forget, ever.

Recently -- which I don't do much -- I sat down to write something I was feeling. So I wrote it down. And you know I rarely read anything, but I will read it to you.

I was in the middle of one of these difficult moments at ICANN where process was weighing on me, and as you know I'm impatient and I want to get things done. But at ICANN, I learned that process is sacred. It's important. So I wrote this.

"Process is the guarantor of our core values. Consensus first. Bottom-up. Fact-based, accountable. And impeccably egalitarian."

But then I wrote, "Spirit, however, is the bond of our community. Trust based. Transparent. Inclusive. Free. And deeply empathetic.

If we do not adhere to our processes, we jeopardize our legitimacy. However, if we lose our spirit, we will fall apart and join the long list of institutions that prioritize procedural purity over our character and principles."

So process is precious, but spirit is sacred. Balancing them wisely is the only assurance of our continued success and the soul of our impressive multistakeholder community.

So with this, I bid you farewell. I will be the best cheerleader for you. I will still travel around the world and tell people that I touched this great community, that I had the privilege of working with you, of sensing the magic of this multistakeholder community.

Thank you very much. Thank you for the opportunity.

[Applause]

DR. STEPHEN CROCKER: One of the most moving speeches I will ever hear.

And I'm sure it's touched every one of us. He's probably touched no one more in a way differently than it has touched most of us and brought fear and terror into his heart. I'm talking about the man who has to follow that act.

[Laughter]

So I'm sure many of you saw the news stories when we announced a few weeks ago that Goran Marby will succeed Fadi as our next President and Chief Executive Officer. And as you might imagine, the search for Fadi's successor was not an easy one.

The board interviewed candidates from around the globe. But what impressed us about Goran was not only his 20-plus years of experience in the I.T. and telecom world and his valuable leadership skills but also the fact that public service is at the very heart and soul of his being.

As the head of Sweden's Post and Telecom Service, he has demonstrated a desire to serve the public. And that is the sort of person that we need to lead ICANN in this next stage of evolution.

So with that, it is my honor to introduce Goran Marby. And I've had the pleasure of getting to know him, and I know that you will, too.

Goran?

[Applause]

MR. GORAN MARBY:

Yeah, Fadi is not an easy act to follow. And I will never be you unfortunately.

Your excellencies, ministers, chairman, Steve, Fadi, friends, and soon-to-be new colleagues, good morning. The good news is that I'm not going to be here for that long on the stage because I'm actually still employed by the Swedish government on vacation.

[Laughter]

I'm very happy to be on vacation in Marrakech.

With that said, I'm very excited to be here. This is a new phase for me and my family. As you know, I will relocate to Los Angeles together with my family. And for some reason, my kids seem to think that California is better than Stockholm.

[Laughter]

A little bit about me, I am, as you probably realize, from Sweden. I have three children. And the official language of the ICANN staff from now on will be Swenglish.

As I said, I spent the last 6 1/2 years working for the Swedish government as the head of PTS. Before that, I worked in the private sector, both startups, most of them in the I.T. industry, very much related to networking and switching. As some of you recognize, I love to talk about the times of the old routers.

This is my first ICANN meeting. But over the years -- which has been emphasized on the fact I'm carrying this green one here. Over the years, I've been fortunate enough to touch ICANN in many different ways. I always had my own teamwork here at ICANN. I was fortunate enough to host the EuroDIG in Stockholm. I have been involved in different areas of Internet governance, which means that I actually know some of you, and I hope that's a positive thing.

One thing that I've really learned over the years is how important the multistakeholder model is. And it's really something that becomes very important for me.

If anyone asks me why I took this job, the multistakeholder model is in the heart of that. And I'm very happy to be a part of this community from the end of May when my vacation ends.

I would like to thank you all for the warm welcome you've given me, especially for the people that I took a bus ride with coming here. It was very, very influential on me. And I hope they had as much fun as I had.

I would like to express a special for Fadi. We have met a couple of times over the years. And the fact that I'm coming in stead of you makes me, as a secret between us, a little bit nervous. You are a great leader and a great role model. And good luck whatever you're going to do.

I also would like to take the opportunity to thank Akram who's going to be the head until I can join at the end of May. I have a great belief in him and in his management team and also for the whole ICANN staff. So far they have given me a very nice ride. I best that's going to change.

[Laughter]

I would like to say that I'm really honored to be here. It's -- it is to be in this part, to be in this particular point of time to be with you and part of this community is an honor for anyone. And I feel really, really excited about this opportunity.

It's a big community, and it's very, very -- it's very, very honorable to be a part of it.

My job in the future is to make sure that all the policies you decide on will be implemented in the correct way. With that, I would like to thank you because I know you got some more important stuff to do. And I will ask you to go back and do it. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

DR. STEPHEN CROCKER: Thank you, Goran. I would like to ask that you stay here for a few moments. I would like to express my gratitude to one other person who will be steering the ICANN ship until Goran is able to officially take the helm in May.

Akram, come on up and join us. Akram, the president of the Generic Domains Division, will be our interim CEO.

He's done this before. He will do it again.

[Applause]

Thanks.

So we're grateful that you're here continuing. This is stability.

[Laughter]

[Applause]

We've mentioned -- Fadi's mentioned and I've mentioned the great team that we have. And no one more exemplifies that than Akram. You have our complete confidence, as you have always had.

Fadi, will you join us, too. And we'll do a little continuity photo op here.

[Applause]

DR. STEPHEN CROCKER: I mentioned earlier that Fadi had done a lot to transform us into an international organization. Part of that work is ICANN's increasing presence on this continent, and in turn, Africa's increasing involvement in ICANN.

So it's no secret that to a very large extent, Africa will help write the next chapter of the Internet's history, and in that context, I'm proud to announce that ICANN's first engagement center in Africa will open on the 1st of April in Kenya, in Nairobi, Kenya.

[Cheers and applause]

That's in about three weeks from now, so things are going to happen at a very rapid pace.

This will be a proud moment for all of us, and with that, I want to turn the microphone back to Baher. Baher Esmat.

BAHER ESMAT: Thank you, Steve. I guess we all liked the continuity photo and also we all like the new engagement center for Africa. It's a key development in the globalization of ICANN. And with that, I'd like to introduce my colleague, Pierre Dandjinou, ICANN's Vice President for Global Stakeholder Engagement in Africa. Pierre will tell us a bit more about the coming days.

Pierre?

[Applause]

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you very much, Baher, and a very warm welcome to all of us again.

And I do have the responsibility and I would say the pleasure to tell us, you know, what are the great happenings, you know, in this week.

So very quickly, I will talk to you about what we will be doing over the week.

So immediately after this opening session, we will move to the high-level governmental meeting. This meeting will be the fourth meeting of this type and it will occur right here during this meeting.

We expect about a hundred participants, high-level participants, and it is a great opportunity for us to talk about Internet governance.

Right after that, we will have a certain amount -- a certain number of meetings. More than 400 meetings will occur here. But of course the main focal point will be the IANA functions transition.

Several of the meetings will address this topic. What we hope by Thursday is to have completed the work, based on the different proposals that will be sent to the board, to the ICANN board, and then following that, that will be sent to the U.S. government.

The idea is to pursue the work done on the transition.

But of course ICANN is a community, a community that gathers, that works. The idea is to have a laboratory of ideas. The idea is to help form policies.

Meetings will occur. Decisions will be made. But of course we are not here just to work. We are not here just to have meetings. We can also have fun at ICANN.

Tonight, we will celebrate Fadi. At 7:00 p.m., the AFRALO showcase will take place. AFRALO is a regional community, the African community.

What I would like to say is also that the nominating period for the ethos prize or reward is a prize that rewards individuals within our community who might have given some time, who might have worked in order to get to a consensus in our work. The nomination of these -- the appointment of these people will be on March 12th.

At that time, rewards will be given within ICANN, and actually the rewards will be given to them during the ICANN 56 meeting.

But as I was mentioning earlier, we also have fun at ICANN. We will also have the gala on Wednesday night, and all of you are invited to come.

This gala will occur in an historical place in Marrakech, the gardens. You know, this meeting is historical so that's a perfect match. The Menara Gardens will be the place where we will have this gala. It is a 12th century historical place. I have never been there so I will discover this site. But that is where the gala will occur.

As I was mentioning, we have 400 meetings during the meeting. 400 sessions. And what is really important is to meet as multistakeholders.

I believe that we have now come to the end of our meeting and I would like to simply mention that we need to get to work. Thank you all.

[Applause]

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. That ends our welcome ceremony here in Marrakech. We have many more wonderful meetings going on today, including the high-level government meeting, Cristal Room at the Palmeraie Palace Hotel, and immediately following this, we have the IANA transition.

Once again, thank you so much for coming.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]