ICANN67 | Virtual Community Forum – NomCom Public Meeting
Monday, March 09, 2020 – 10:45 to 12:15 EST

JIA-JUH KIMOTO: Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. This is the 2020 NomCom Public Meeting on Monday, 9 March 2020 and this meeting is being recorded. In the interest of time, there will be no role call and the attendance will be taken by the Zoom room. We would like to remind all participants to please state your name before speaking and to please keep your phones and microphones on mute when not speaking to avoid any background noise. Please raise your hand if you have any questions or if you would like to speak.

With this, we will turn it over to Jay Sudowski, 2020 NomCom Chair. Jay, please go ahead.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Thanks, Jia. I appreciate the introduction and thank you everybody for being here remotely. I have to say I think at least looking at the attendance in the Zoom room, there is more attendees for a NomCom public session than I've ever experienced in my life. So with that, I think we will just jump right in. Jia, if you could move to the next slide.

So we have six main points that we're going to touch on today here. We're going to go over the composition of the current NomCom, our big goals and objectives, what we need to accomplish this year in terms of the leadership positions that we're selecting. We'll talk a little bit about the regional distribution of the candidates, the number of

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Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

applicants that we've had so far and also the gender composition of the applicant pool. We'll touch on the timeline. I think there might be a lot of interest in that, just with respect to the COVID-19 situation and the impacts of moving to a more remote process. And then we'll conclude our presentation.

I think typically we have plenty of time to go through here, so as you have questions, if you have questions, I'm happy to take them as they come. I'll just look for your hand in the Zoom room and we'll go from there. Can I get the next slide? Thank you.

So I am Jay Sudowski. I'm Chair of the NomCom. Last year, I was Chair Elect and prior to that, I served two terms as a regular NomCom member. I come from the business constituency within the ICANN ecosystem and on a day-to-day basis, I run a technology company and I have also a bakery that I own with my wife.

My Chair-Elect this year is Ole Jacobsen. Ole has been on many a NomComs, most recently two but he's done many cycles. And then my Associate Chair is Damon Ashcraft.

As leadership, we certainly have been working hard this past month to figure out how to best address the travel impacts. We also have a very diverse group of general NomCom members. We have members that represent every area of the ICANN community except for the GAC. I certainly wish it would be possible to find a way to get GAC engagement but we haven't been able to do that. I think on the committee side this year, we've all been working extremely well together. I don't know if any folks on the committee or leadership

want to give a short introduction for themselves. If you do, please raise your hand and take yourself off mute. Go ahead, Tracy.

TRACY HACKSHAW: Hi. I'm representing the At-Large community from the Latin America and Caribbean region. I'm an independent consultant and I'm taking very [sunny] [inaudible] to be in the Caribbean.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Thanks. Damon?

DAMON ASHCRAFT: Thank you, Jay. I am Associate Chair of the NomCom and I want to thank, we have great attendance today which is fantastic. And so I look forward to working with everybody this year and especially it's going to be a different year for us. Just thank… We really appreciate the fantastic attendance that we have today on the line. Thank you.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Thanks, Damon. Ole?

OLE JACOBSEN: Hi. I'm the Chair-Elect, so I get to do this hopefully starting in October if the cycle goes as we hope it will. Happy to hear everyone on the call today.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Annebeth?

ANNEBETH LANGE: Hi. I'm representing the ccNSO in NomCom this year. I've been in ICANN for several years, 20 years now, representing the GAC for the first 12 and then the ccTLDs. So I hope I have some experience from this to do a good job selecting new Board members to our [inaudible] members that we will do before the summer, hopefully. Thank you for attending.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Lawrence?

LAWRENCE OLAWALE-ROBERTS: Good day, everybody. I'm a member of the Business Constituency. I represent the SMEs, the small seats on the BC. And I've been second year on the NomCom and about seven years running within the ICANN community. It's nice to see such attendance here today and I look forward towards [inaudible].

JAY SUDOWSKI: Thank you, Lawrence. Amrita?

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Hi, everybody. My name is Amrita Choudhury, At-Large from the Asia-Pacific region. This is my first year in NomCom. Happy to see everyone

from different parts of the world connecting at this [hour] for the first session online. Thank you.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Thank you. Hadia?

HADIA ELMINIAWI: I represent At-Large from the Africa region. It's my first time on the NomCom and I'm happy to see this great attendance. Thank you.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Thanks. Pankaj?

PANKAJ CHATURVEDI: HI, there. I represent ASOAC constituency and this is my first time in NomCom and I'm happy to be here. Thank you.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Thanks. Peter?

PETER KOCH: Hi. I've been appointed by the Internet Engineering Task Force and this is also my first time on NomCom.

JAY SUDOWSKI: All right. Thank you. Any other committee members want to jump in here before we proceed?

PAUL MITCHELL: Hi. I represent the large business constituency within the Business Constituency.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Thank you, Paul. And Glenn says that he's having mic problems but he represents North America At-Large, second time on as NomCom.

KRISTINE DORRAIN: Can you hear me?

JAY SUDOWSKI: Yeah.

KRISTINE DORRAIN: Hi. Kristine Dorrain, representing the registry constituency, Registry Stakeholder Group. Thanks. This is my first time on NomCom.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Thanks, Kristine.

MARIE-NOÉMIE MARQUES: Can you hear me?

JAY SUDOWSKI: Yeah.

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MARIE-NOÉMIE MARQUES: Marie-Noémie Marques from GNSO ISPCP. Hello, everyone. This is my first time. Yeah. Bye. Thanks.

JAY SUDOWSKI: All right. Can we move to the next slide?

Okay. This year, the NomCom has seven leadership positions that we're going to fill. We have one Board seat for PTI so a three-year term which is a standard term for PTI.

We're also filling two Board seats for the regular ICANN Board of Directors. Both of these are also three-year terms. We have a non-voting, non-affiliated seat for GNSO Council, a two-year term. We also have ALAC Europe and ALAC North America, one seat for each. Both are two-year terms and then we'll appoint one individual to ccNSO Council for a three-year term.

This year, we have fairly good regional distribution of applications. In total, we've received 96 completed application forms. We did move up the application deadline compared to past years. So I think the total number of applications is down a little bit compared to last year. But we still have a very qualified pool of candidates. We had 17 individuals from North America, 22 from Latin America/Caribbean, 22 from Africa, 28 from Asia, Australia, and the Pacific region, and seven from Europe. So it's very encouraging to see such a large number of candidates coming from areas that typically may have been under-represented in some respect at ICANN.

This year was the first year the NomCom gave folks the option of specifying a third gender which was not to disclose their gender. Of the folks that did disclose their gender, the gender balance this year seems to be skewed towards the male side with 68% of folks that complete an application indicated male, 19% female, and 13% did not disclose. This, certainly for our process and our perspective, we have a mandate both in the bylaws and just, I think, a desire from the community to appoint diverse leaders within ICANN and gender certainly is part of that equation. But we also wanted to be… just acknowledge the fact that some individuals do not identify with one specific gender. So we gave folks that option this year. And about 13% picked that option.

Here's an overview of our timeline. So the application phase is completed now. The application window closed at the end of February. We worked with a couple of different recruiting firms and also our members did outreach to recruit people to apply for leadership positions. We intended to start our assessment phase of the selections this year at ICANN 67. Due to the travel situation, we are sort of pausing that process. It should not impact the overall NomCom timeline or processes because we did move up the initial application deadline date by about a month. Historically, the NomCom has used this March meeting to do additional outreach and training for the committee so while we're disappointed that we're not able to travel right now and we're not able to start our face-to-face candidate assessment work, we're not concerned that this is going to impact our overall process at this point.

So what we had contemplated originally was that by the end of ICANN 67, we will had completed what we call our initial [wheeling] process which takes the candidate pool down to a targeted set of numbers for each position. From there, we would go into a deep dive process for the remaining candidates and then we anticipated going to Washington D.C. in mid-April for an intercessional where we would sort through those candidates and then come down to final selections for folks that we would bring to Kuala Lumpur for face-to-face interviews or for remote interviews that we were going to conduct with other counsel, GNSO Council and At-Large and ccNSO Council positions.

After KL, we… Well, so to back up, in KL, we will do face-to-face interviews for ICANN Board of Director positions and PTI Board of Directors. And we will make our final selections after we complete those interviews for all the positions. After that, the work of the committee is not done. There's ICANN Org takes on a responsibility to do due diligence on any selected leadership candidates. It's a background check and some other things that take some time. And then the committee works together to put together a list of recommendations based upon the process this year.

And then finally, in October 2020, we anticipate that our selected candidates will be appointed at that AGM. I think if you want to move to the next slide, we can talk a little bit about how the travel situation is going to impact our processes.

JIA-JUH KIMOTO: Hi, Jay. There's a question in the chat.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Yep.

JIA-JUH KIMOTO: What is the planning case where ICANN 68 is purely virtual for face-to-face meetings?

JAY SUDOWSKI: Yeah. Maxim, thank you for the question. It's… Unfortunately, I think the answer is that we don't really have an answer yet. You know, the committee and leadership is very hopeful that we will be able to have face-to-face meetings. If we can't have face-to-face meetings for the final interviews, that will be something that is unprecedented for the NomCom as far as I'm aware and we're working with Org to figure out what solutions might exist to provide some level of face-to-face interaction, whether it's through enhanced Zoom meetings where everybody is on a webcam or some sort of, like me, a micro remote hub type solution. But it's a very dynamic situation. It's changing rapidly and if I had a magic crystal ball and could tell you what this situation is going to look like in June, I would. But I don't. So that's where we're at.

And I think that really, that question is something that the leadership and the committee takes very seriously is that it's the idea of how can we ultimately select people to the Board of Directors, both for PTI and

for ICANN, without actually having the opportunity to meet with them and interact with them face-to-face.

In the past, we've had candidates that look great on paper, that look great through the deep dive process, and then we're putting them for a face-to-face interview and it's very clear that those candidates would not be effective within ICANN, and perhaps even worse than not being effective, they could be very disruptive.

So this is something that looms large over the leadership in terms of how we can approach that and Damon, I see your hand, so feel free to jump in.

DAMON ASHCRAFT: Sure. Thank you very much, Jay. Yeah, I mean, just to touch on the issues with the ICANN, with the meeting in Kuala Lumpur, the ability to interview people face-to-face is really critical to our process. And so we're working closely with Org on that to make sure that we could go ahead and we can do that. But just rest assured. It is the number one priority of the NomCom to select quality people for ICANN. That's above speed. That's above doing things we originally wanted to. That is our number one priority and I think face-to-face meetings are a key aspect to that. But that's really what we're focused on and Org has been really helpful as far as reaching out. Leadership, we had a call with John Jeffrey on Friday to discuss things. We had a good, productive call. And so we are… Obviously, we're very concerned but we're also monitoring it.

And you know, June's a far… That's a few months out and so we don't think it's time to be overly concerned just yet but we're obviously really monitoring that really well.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Yeah. Thanks Damon. Ole, I don't know if you want to say anything on the topic.

OLE JACOBSEN: No. I think it's been said. Thank you.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Okay. Yeah, so a comment I see here from [Juan Spetter] says that the NomCom has done Skype interviews in the past. But the actual NomCom was still in the same room and I think – HP, correct me if I'm wrong – but those Skype interviews were done just due to scheduling issues that candidates had or maybe travel glitches made it not possible for them to come to the June meeting for that face-to-face interaction.

So it is… It's a challenge. We're certainly aware of it. We're doing everything that we can to figure out alternatives and I think at this time, that is kind of where we stand.

Assuming everything goes well and we're able to get face-to-face by June or even perhaps in July, we can go through the due diligence process and notify our community of our selections two months before the AGM. So I think that is around August 20th or 21st where we

would need to make that notification. So we do have a little bit of wiggle room there as well.

I think that really is the crux of our timeline situation. We really have just one slide left which is a closing slide, so maybe Jia, we can leave this up here and we'll open it up for additional questions now if folks have any. We do have a fair amount of time left and I certainly would love to take some more questions.

Hey, Glenn. I don't think we lost audio. Just opening the floor up for questions or discussions. I see a little commentary happening in the chat, but if folks have questions about the NomCom processes this year in general or additional questions related to face-to-face, I'm happy to take them. Tracy, go ahead.

TRACY HACKSHAW: Yes. Hi. I'm just wondering if there's a timeline that we could announce to the community if/when there might be changes to the process as I've been [told] through with ICANN [this year].

JAY SUDOWSKI: Yeah. No, that's a good question. I don't think anything has happened in terms of an official announcement around the timeline. As of now, we're really, I think, taking a multi-track approach. One, we're hopeful that we'll be able to resume our process the way that we intended and essentially repeat what was done last year. And then we're also working with ICANN Org to come up with an alternate process that could be used if travel still is impacted in April, May and June.

So I think even though the process might look a little bit different from the perspective of folks that have applied for leadership positions, they should be assured that they will receive the same level of consideration as we intended it originally when our process was designed. So that means that every candidate for every position will be reviewed on an individual basis. The committee will go through a process to discuss each individual candidate. We'll poll on each individual candidate and then we'll vote on each individual candidate to see if they should proceed in the process or not.

Whether we do this face-to-face or remotely, that [inaudible] is something that we will absolutely make sure happens this year. Ole?

OLE JACOBSEN: Yeah. I just want… Oops. Can you hear me? Yes. I just wanted to say that at the moment, ICANN Org has an until the end of March, basically, hold on any travels. So I guess at the end of March, we would have some idea of where to go next. If that means that we can't do the April intercessional or whatever, but we certainly won't know anything until the end of March.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Damon?

DAMON ASHCRAFT: Sure. Thank you very much, Jay. And I just wanted to let everybody who's in attendance know one of the reasons that we're pushing so

hard for the face-to-face, we want to make sure that happens particularly during ICANN 68 is that so that you're aware, when we meet at the selection meeting, those meetings are… They're pretty much all day long. They can often go anywhere between eight to ten hours. Sometimes they've gone 12 hours and it'll be like that pretty much all week. And so that's one of the reasons that we're really pushing that because to do something virtual for that meeting, it would be pretty difficult to ask people to be on a phone call for eight to ten hours a day straight with the time zone differences. Realistically, we would have to stretch it out probably to two or three different weeks to get it to happen. But just so you're aware, that was sort of… That's typically how the process goes is what we do is we will usually interview two to three candidates. We'll have an hour prep before each interview. We'll have the interview which is an hour and then we'll have an hour sort of debrief after that.

And so in case there's questions as to what exactly happens and what the timing is, I wanted to sort of shed some light as to what actually happens during ICANN 68 and why we're working so hard with everybody to try to make a face-to-face happen.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Yeah. That's a great point, Damon. And I think for the benefit of folks who are on this meeting, the committee has members in time zones on one side, UTC -700. And then on the other side, up to UTC +5.5. So it's a very broad range of time zones that our membership comes from. And one way or another, it's very disruptive to meet for even six

hours or eight hours when folks, some folks are either going to be in their overnight or some folks are going to be very early in the morning. And then if you start doing shorter meetings, then you just… the process gets much longer and you have this need for tremendous amount of additional total meetings even if the hours are about the same.

And Tracy had a very good suggestion. Maybe there's some special things ICANN can do for us in terms of a yacht or a private jet. My guess is that would be a tough sell. But I think we still have plenty… HP, go ahead.

HANS PETTER HOLEN: Thank you. Since you're begging for comments, I thought I'd just add some few words from my perspective.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Please go ahead.

HANS PETTER HOLEN: So I really want to thank all of the members of NomCom for serving. I've been on the NomCom for too many years myself so I know what you're up to and I think this year you will face challenges that nobody has faced before. And I trust that you will be fully capable of making the right judgment calls into doing what feels right to select the best people possible.

I think if we had gone some years back in the process, you wouldn't have felt as limited by not traveling as we learned during the last couple of years when we did more of deliberations by meeting face-to-face. And I really want to say that yes, it helped a lot to meet face-to-face and discuss. But it has been possible in the past to do that, although it took endless number of meetings and too long calls. So I won't recommend it, but it's possible.

Replacing the face-to-face interviews though, that will be ground-breaking for you so I'm not sure I can give you any advice on that one. But I wish you luck and really trust you on this guys.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Yeah. Thanks, HP. I think my first cycle on NomCom, you were the Chair and my recollection is that we did do a lot of the work remotely but just even setting up the meetings was quite an undertaking and that's something that we did at the AGM. So we set up these meetings that would happen over the course of April, May and June remotely, in October or November the year before just because the committee members are typically very busy, they have packed schedules, and they also have time zone considerations.

So now we're even looking at doing that, trying to fit our work into people's existing schedules can be a challenge. I think it might be helpful for the community to hear kind of maybe the "what if" scenarios, the "what if we can't meet face-to-face?" even for interviews and how that might impact our process and our timeline.

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And I want to be clear right now that these are… Really, these are just theoretical what-ifs. I feel very strongly that ultimately one way or another, the committee will be able to come to decisions this year. But there is a possibility that if we don't get face-to-face interviews in June or early July, that we may miss the deadline required in the bylaws to notify the Empowered Community or selection. It may also mean that ICANN would possibly need to do due diligence on substantially more candidates. This way, let's say maybe we can't travel in June but it seems that the situation with the coronavirus is dying down and maybe we can do face-to-face interviews in July. The only way that we could meet that deadline is if ICANN did much more due diligence on a broader number of candidates.

And then I think the real doomsday scenario is if this situation with COVID-19 doesn't increase and we can't come to a level of, I guess, our own… If we can't feel that we can properly vet people and get what we need from them that we typically would get out of a face-to-face interview, there is a small possibility that potentially we would need even more time and then maybe we wouldn't be able to make our appointments until after the AGM. This, again, is an entirely hypothetical situation looking at the "what ifs" and a lot of "what ifs" would have to not pan out for that to happen. And we're committed to making sure that we can avoid that. We have good communication processes in place with the ICANN Org. But it's still a possibility. HP?

HANS PETTER HOLEN: Yeah. If you're asking for brainstorming thoughts here, I think that if you have to do the face-to-face interviews remotely, a set up where you have one or two people actually asking the questions and the rest of the NomCom just listening in and watching the video, that is a set-up that might work and using that work for recruiting purposes. And you may want to then have follow-up interviews with all the candidates after deliberations. But I think that could be done.

I think the big challenge is having the face-to-face discussions of the NomCom after the interviews to sort of feel each other out and establish consensus on the right candidates. I think that's the really tricky part, at least at the end. Earlier on, it's been possible to do it by conferences in the past. But I think at the very end, not being able to look each other in the eyes and also discuss informally between the sessions will make it more difficult for you to achieve consensus but I don't think it's impossible.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Yeah. No, it's not impossible. But it's certainly challenging and there's a lot of value that comes from being in the same room and being able to certainly really read people, both the candidates during the interviews and other committee members, body language, energy level, all these things so that we're really ensuring that when we're making our final selections that there is consensus and that it's a true consensus and not just a consensus through fatigue. Ashley?

ASHLEY ROBERTS: You can hear me okay?

JAY SUDOWSKI: Yep.

ASHLEY ROBERTS: I've got a question about appointments to the GNSO Council. So I know that doesn't, this question doesn't apply to this particular year's NomCom but I know you've got a number of members that have participated on previous years so I wondered if their previous experiences might be able to answer this question.

And the question relates to if you have a year where you're appointing two members to the Council and one member is from each house of the Council, do you have any criteria that you use to decide which appointee goes to which house of the Council or is it purely arbitrary?

JAY SUDOWSKI: Yeah, thanks. I can… I think I can talk to that just because I've been involved with NomCom long enough and I hail from the GNSO myself. So I'm acutely aware of the important role that NomCom appointees should play within GNSO Council and frustratingly, sometimes they haven't played. I think officially, the way the NomCom works and if you go look at the ICANN bylaws, the NomCom selects specifically which house candidates will go into.

Last year, the way that we did that–and Damon, correct me if I'm wrong–was we looked at the applicants in totality and then we came

down to a short list and then we tried to discern the best place that they would fit within GNSO Council, whether contracted party house or noncontracted party house. Damon?

DAMON ASHCRAFT: Yeah. Thank you very much, Jay. That's exactly what we did and we even had separate deliberations on the separate houses and we got a lot of insight from the different NomCom members that were pretty much at each house on those issues. And so that was really helpful. And so short answer is there is no formal procedure in place, but informal, we absolutely do consider it. We recognize that they are two different places, different skill sets and it certainly is discussed and it's discussed at length.

And with respect to the GNSO, it had been this committee's hope to do more interviews and more, to do some video interviews with the GNSO candidates this year. With everything that's going on, we're not quite sure if we're still going to be able to do that but it is certainly something we want to do. We want to work on enhancing our process with respect to GNSO selections.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Yeah. Thanks, Damon.

The one thing I'll note as well, Ashley, is that earlier this year as part of our getting ready to have the application window be open and before we started any sort of assessment work, we reached out to really all the SOs and ACs, one, to let them know about the changes in the

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application window timeline. But also, we reached out to GNSO Council specifically to try to get advice from them on a number of issues around preferences that they might have for the kinds of individuals that are appointed and if a non-contracted party or a contracted party or individual should have different attributes and things like that. So we did get a response back from GNSO Council. This year, we are just appointing the one individual of the GNSO Council who is not affiliated with the house and is non-voting. So it's less important. But certainly, next year it would be my hope that we could get some more pointed advice from GNSO that we can consider so that we can select people that will be affected in those roles.

I'm not sure. We still have some time left, so if folks have other questions, we are certainly happy to take them. I see in the chat here, folks are talking a little bit about just the benefits of face-to-face interactions and some potential security implications of doing remote interviews of candidates. So I think we'll leave this open for a couple more minutes if folks maybe are contemplating questions that they'd want to ask to give folks time to sort out in their minds what they want to say. Feel free to put it in a chat. Feel free to raise your hand.

Yeah, thank you Keith, that is, for the link there. It was much appreciated to get that from you guys this year. Damon?

DAMON ASHCRAFT: Thank you very much, Jay. I just wanted to, again, thank everybody who has joined. Seeing this type of participation, especially in a virtual meeting, is fantastic. Obviously, this year, things are in flux and we are

aware of the NomCom's reputation for being a bit of a blackbox and a bit of a mystery with respect to how processes go and to the extent that those concerns are heightened this year because of all of the travel restrictions, we, Jay, myself and Ole, and the entire NomCom want to make it very, very clear that we welcome questions. We want to be as upfront with the community about what we're doing, changes we're making, discussions we're having with Org so that everybody is aware of what's going on. And again, number one goal as always is to provide the best Board members and other leaders for ICANN.

JAY SUDOWSKI: Thanks, Damon. I'm not seeing any other hands or any other questions in the chat. I do want to echo Damon's sentiment. We thank everybody for participating here today. We certainly understand how the NomCom processes can seem less than transparent. We are doing everything in our power this year to improve that. One of the things that we will be doing is actually publishing, I think for the first time ever, our selection process document. Given that the selection process is still somewhat in flux due to the travel situation, we're not going to publish that yet but that will get published and we have our operating procedures and our member code of conduct and participation agreement up on the website if folks want to look at it. And I think with that, I appreciate everybody's time both from the community and from the NomCom itself and from ICANN Org. If you guys have any additional questions, feel free to reach out to myself or Jia and we'll be happy to get you an answer of some sort. Certainly, anything related to specific candidates or anything like that, we're not able to

answer just due to the confidentiality of our process. But if you have comments around the process itself, the timeline and things like that, I certainly would appreciate your feedback, your questions, your comments, and thank you all for your time today.

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