ICANN75 | AGM – Welcome Ceremony
Monday, September 19 2022 - 09:00 to 10:00 KUL

JIA RONG LAW: Friends, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, good morning! I am Jia-Rong, your emcee for this morning. I am the Regional Vice President for Stakeholder Engagement and Managing Director of the ICANN Asia Pacific office. It is my pleasure to kick off ICANN's 75th Public Meeting here in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia!

Welcome to the APAC Region; welcome to Malaysia. The last ICANN Meeting held in Malaysia was 18 years ago in 2004. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Malaysia, particularly the Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau for supporting this meeting.

We were scheduled to be here two years ago, but the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted those plans, as with everything else. I like to ask people - what skill did you pick up during the pandemic? For me, my "COVID-19" skill is cooking. My family thinks that I'm a talented cook, but actually, I'm not. Here is my secret "is the Internet". It is so easy to find the best recipes on the Internet.

So, thank you - Internet community - for keeping the Internet working. And thank you, ICANN community, for working tirelessly remotely over Zoom for the past 2 years. And now it is so good to finally be able to meet again in person.

[applause]

For those joining us online, we have not forgotten you, thank you for sharing the pain, stepping up to attend the session even though you are in a different time zone.

Now, allow me to hand the floor to our Board Chair, Maarten Botterman, for his opening remarks. Please join me in welcoming Maarten.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Thank you. Removing a mouth mask is a little bit more difficult if you also have hearing aids, and that is one of the things I discovered over time. But otherwise, being safe together makes it possible to meet in a good way together.

[non-English word or phrase], good morning or good afternoon, good evening, wherever you are. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the ICANN75 Annual General Meeting, here in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. For those in the room. , I invite you to look to your left

and at your right, and you may well sit next to somebody you know, but maybe you don't know that person but one thing I can tell you, what you share is the same ambition, to support ICANN and support the critical work to promote global Internet.

Also, a big welcome for those joining us online. At ICANN74, our first hybrid meeting after more than two years only face to face meetings at all, we had more than 900 participants online and more than 900 registered in the room. It was happening in The Hague, which happen to be my city of birth, and for this first meeting we did manage to really organize things and keep the territory safe and make sure that people appreciated working in it.

So, after more than two years of developing or briefing the best in class virtual meetings, we set to develop also the best in class hybrid meetings, and we hope this one is a prove of that, and we appreciate all your feedback and help to make sure that the next one is even better.

Over the past year, ICANN has been quite successful in advancing important work, it has been a busy yet productive year for the ICANN Board as well. COVID times bring challenges in accomplishing work, and to be able to do so the Board held 14 formal meetings, six multiple day workshops, over twenty info

calls and countless committee, caucus, and working group sessions, all in virtual until we met in the Hague again, just prior to ICANN74. And I think this is the experience we all share, that we have to [inaudible - 00:04:22] over time, because of the virtual ways we don't lose much time in travel but we do spend a lot of time in stretching from one to another meeting and have more meetings to understand each other well. So, with that, I would like to report on the number of actions taken by the Board this year.

First, on New gTLD Subsequent Procedures, we asked the organization to conduct an Operational Design Phase, to assess the recommendations in the GNSO's Final Report on this as to stand ready to move forward in a responsible way. The ODP, as we call it, a new acronym, focuses on the assessment of the risks, costs and infrastructure needed for the initiatives with a mechanism to test ideas and assumptions with the community before a decision is taken by the Board to accept the policy recommendations. And this is really keeping in line with our strategic goal to plan a properly funded, managed and risk evaluated new round of gTLD that reflects that we have learned from what we have done so far together.

Another important topic has been DNS Abuse, a topic high on the minds of many, and in the ICANN community, local different

discussions taking place on that as well. The Board created a caucus group on that to specifically explore what is the state of affairs and how we, as the Board, can help you as best as possible in this discussion. And with the realization of DNS Abuse, addressing is a must, but we need to do so based on real facts and with a keen eye on our specific role on this.

A new thing as well was adding supporting Internet access in emergency situations. In March, the Board directed ICANN Org to allocate $1 million dollars in financial assistance to support Internet access in emergency situations. Our initial intent was to ensure Internet access for those in Ukraine affected by the Russian-Ukraine war, the Board also asked to evaluate how this helped to, indeed, help ensure unimpeded access to the Internet and the free flow of information, so people could gain knowledge and exposure to a diversity of viewpoints and information, which is especially critical when timely access to information and communication may be lifesaving.

And last but not least, also, the Auction Proceeds. In June, the Board approved the recommendations of the Cross-Community Working Group on New gTLD Auction Proceeds. These were the proceeds that were received after the previous round based on the auctions conducted by the organization to resolve issues for competing TLDs took place. The resulting ICANN grant program

will deliver millions of dollars to projects around the world that support a single interoperable Internet and work on this is advancing [inaudible - 00:07:45].

So, these are a couple of key examples of what we achieved, we achieved a lot together. Consistently deliver to the mission, for almost 25 years now, which has helped people all over the world to benefit in many ways, both in social and economic terms, providing access to people, to things, to data, to markets and providing an essential infrastructure to enable our society to deal with global societal challenges, such as those expressed by the UN Sustainable Development Goals and beyond.

Our role is more important than ever, and we need to address the challenges to fulfill our mission effectively in a world where governments are considering legislation that could impact the technical governance of the Internet, not always aware of possible unintended consequences. And bad actors are increasingly sophisticated in taking advantage of unprepared users getting online, and new players are entering the name space and potentially jeopardizing the existence of a single interoperable Internet. These and other challenges we need to address today, and we need to plan for addressing these in the future as well, because the Internet is not for now but for the decades to come.

So, our goal this week is to further explore how to continue to meet the challenges and opportunities that come our way, and I invite you all to contribute to this discussion, whether you're in the room or online. I ask you to share your views and to listen to others. Listening is a necessity if we want to learn from the rich diversity of our stakeholders from all over the world. Listening opens an opportunity to contemplate view points, others than your own, and you may find that it changes your perspective for the better. So, let's ensure that all voices are heard, the loud ones, alike the soft ones.

This is, in fact, the basis of ICANN's commitment to its bottom-up multistakeholder model of governance where the community is leading, supported by the organization and whereby the Board is providing oversight, ensuring that what we do is legal, in line with bylaws, reasonable, and in the global public interest.

Of course, the way we work together, the way we work together can always be better, hence our commitment to continuous improvement and in doing this, we must remember that even though the acronym ICANN sounds like "I can", there is not much we can do individually, we need to work together to get things done and to fulfill ICANN's mission.

ICANN|75
KUALA LUMPUR

So, my thanks to you and the community for your unwavering commitment to this work. Even in difficult times, you persevere and contribute where you can. Huge thanks also to our colleagues from ICANN Org, who have continued to support us, and me, over the years. Even when it was not possible together, in-person, or even to work together in the offices, as teams. Thanks, you all, for all you do.

And finally, I would like to thank our host, the Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau and the Tourism Promotion Board, as well as our guests from .my, here in the room, for welcoming us and making it possible to meet in this exquisite location. [non-English word or phrase].

[applause]

One more thing, the AGM is additionally also a time of leadership changes, in the community and this time also in the Board. Exceptionally, with the AGM being held during the [00:11:52 - inaudible] of September, the Board combined its preparation for the AGM with its preparation for the organization of the Board, for the years to come. Through this process we decided to elect Tripti Sinha as our new Chair and Danko Jevtović as our new Vice-Chair, this will be done by vote on Thursday.

[applause]

And I would like to speak also on behalf of the current Vice Chair, León Sánchez, when I thank the Board, the organization, and the community for its trust and support in us over the last three years. It's an honor and a true privilege to serve you, and Leon and I will continue to do so at the best of our abilities towards the future and offer our full support to Tripti and Danko, as they lead the Board in the year ahead.

I speak for the entire Board when I say we look forward to engaging you in the coming week, during the Board meetings, with the community and in other sessions, as well as in the corridors, don't hesitate to approach us, we are here to hear from you.

With that, I would like to welcome to the stage ICANN's Org president and CEO, Göran Marby. Thank you very much.

[applause]

GÖRAN MARBY: There's a very strong light here. Welcome to ICANN75! ICANN's first hybrid Annual General Meeting in three years. It's fantastic to see everybody. Also, for myself, this is the first time I have ever

been in Kuala Lumpur. And here we are, again. It's warm, it's raining, and it's in the morning. I have to make that joke but everybody who makes a joke that I make a joke about I don't like mornings. So, this is for you, guys.

I like to extend a special thanks to the host, the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau, and its COO, Mr. Noor Ahmad Hamid and the Malaysian Network Information Center and its chairman, Dr. Mohamed Awang Lah, we are grateful for your hospitality.

And thank you, everybody who's joining us, even if you are here in the room, if you are in a hotel room, if you are here remotely. It is your hard work, your commitment that makes this meeting possible. And although COVID forced us not to meet and have seven online meetings, we were finally able to return, and I have to say, when we met up in Holland, that was the pre-stage for this meeting, and I feel I'm just walking on sun streams right now, because I'm so happy to see you all.

But the Hague meeting was a real success. There have been many meetings that turned into spreader events. The Hague meeting didn't, and the only reason for that was you. This says something about the ICANN community and the respect you show to each other, how to deal with people and treat the people, wear the

different badges, and how you interacted, that has made The Hague meeting, from a Covid perspective, a success and I thank you all for that, and I really know that that is going to happen also for this meeting.

I always get a little bit sentimental when I go to the Annual General Meeting, I have to admit. Because in this room, online and around the world, there are people from governments, academia, civil society and industry, a long but individual Internet users, is making it one of the few events that actually exists in the world like this, and this is one of the things that makes the multi-stakeholder model one of the most inclusive and democratic forms of governance.

I have said many times and I still believe, I think this is a large peace project, we bring people from all over the world together from different stages in life, come together for work, for one goal. In this room and online we have people from more than 100 countries coming together. I think that is a peace project.

So, when ICANN started, we had a global mandate from the start. When I speak at one, it was there from the start, somewhere in the room, I don't think they ever imagined that we went from -- to 5.3 billion users around the world. But remember, we have a responsibility not only for those online today but also for the ones

ICANN|75
KUALA LUMPUR

who are not online, to make it possible to be online. The power of the Internet comes from a single interoperable network of networks that is easily accessible globally and locally.

True interoperability requires global access to the internet and when people go online, they need to be able to access easily, in their own language and using their own keyboard. Remember, interoperable means that internet is accessible, we can do this by ensuring that everyone has access to the same system of unique identifiers. And is still interesting that the majority of the domains out there are Latin script and actually mainly in English, despite the fact that less than only 20 percent of the world's population actually do speak English, some of us speak Swenglish.

Far too many people are left behind, unable to benefit from the internet because they cannot navigate in their own language or use their own keyboard. That is one of the reasons why you are here, and we are, and you are working to add non-latin scripts to internet protocols and identifiers, by doing so I hope we will create an Internet that is both global and local, at the same time, to welcome the next billion users.

I want to create an Internet that is not only interoperable for machines, I want to create an internet that is actually interoperable for people. So, one of the things from me standing

here is to talk a little bit about what we have done, and over the last two years since we went into COVID mode, a lot of things have been done and I want to thank my team, the whole Org, for all the hard work they have done. It's been incredible but they're also very proud of what you have done, together with you. For instance, last year, only last year, David supported more than 4,000 community calls during one year.

So, what have we done? We, for instance, delivered a WHOIS system design twice. We were working very intensely on the SubPro ODP, and I want to thank the interaction with the community. We're in the final stages, as Maarten said, of the ICANN Grant Program and we also, as you might know, just recently added a lot of Public Comment Proceedings, which I'm sorry, they came, many of them at the same time and it creates a lot of work for you. But I am looking forward to discussions this week.

And as you know, this Annual General Meeting is important to me and my team, it's really when we come together. But you can also scrutinize me and the Board; is now your time to ask any questions about what we do. My job is to facilitate the discussions within the community, and I hope we will going to do a great job with that.

But there are other challenges outside our world. You might know that in the next ten coming days there is a meeting, an ITU, there is an election for the ITU Secretary-General and there are really two platforms on that one. One of the candidates' platforms is to take over, wants to take over what ICANN does, what the RIR does, what the ITF does, actually all the acronyms. We don't believe that. We believe in the multistakeholder model and what we have done in the ecosystem together with our partners has served the world well. It's important to maintain and fight for what we think is the interoperability of the internet governed by the multistakeholder model as we are going forward.

I think it reminds us of something. What we do is a little bit like fighting for peace; you don't fight for peace when war is broken out, you fight for peace before it actually happened, we have to continue to work for the multistakeholder model now, before it's challenged too much.

Because there is one thing you never heard in your life, maybe have, but it was thirty years ago, "The Internet went down, the internet doesn't work." It's constantly working and if it doesn't, please call Nic, she is usually responsible for it. [jokingly]

ICANN is unique, is one of the few places in the world where representatives from government, civil society, academia and business come together and I'll quote this again, "Is one of the last world's biggest peace projects.".

So, welcome, my friends. And I know that this is going to be the best meeting ever. Thank you very much.

[applause]

JIA-RONG LOW: Thank you, Göran. Echoing what Göran just said about Internationalized Domain Names, in the past few years the global script communities have formed Generation Panels to determine which letters or characters can be a top-level domain. And did you know that, after 26 scripts the panels worked on, 19 are being used in the APAC region. So please, join me to thank the Generation Panels for their hard work in paving the way to a multi-lingual Internet and connecting the next billion, most of whom will be from this region.

[applause]

On Wednesday there will be a session to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of the global script communities. The

session is titled "Celebrating the Multistakeholder Model in the Development of Good Zone Label Generation Rules". Do join us for that session, which will be at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

Now, let us invite our next speaker on stage, Dr. Mohamed Awang Lah, chairman of MyNIC, who is also known as the Father of the Malaysia Internet.

[applause]

DR. MOHAMED AWANG LAH: Mr.   Maarten Botterman, Chair of ICANN Board of Directors, Mr. Göran Marby, ICANN President and CEO, distinguished speakers, honorable guests, ladies and gentlemen, [non-English word or phrase] and very good morning.

First and foremost, I am honored to be here today. And my sincere gratitude to ICANN for inviting me to speak at the Opening Ceremony of 75th ICANN Public Meeting. I was requested to talk about my experience, the challenges, as well as the vision and I will try to do that as much as I can, within the limited time.

On this occasion I would like to congratulate ICANN for organizing this meeting, as it brings together the key players, experts and professionals in different regions of the globe into one

community, objectively focusing and dedicated to working on issues that impact the future of the Internet. It is an honor for us to welcome you to Malaysia, to welcome the ICANN community to Kuala Lumpur, and it is an acknowledgment of the enormous role and contribution this community plays towards ensuring a secure and stable Internet environment for everyone.

The bottom-up consensus driven multistakeholder model and discussed among ICANN community has been pivotal in fostering developments and ensuring smooth coordination of Internet addressing ecosystem globally. This conference reminds me about INET97, held 25 years ago, in Kuala Lumpur, in 1997, that brought together, if I remember correctly, close to a thousand participants. At that time there was no headphone, the way that it looks today, so we had to provide around 200 desktop PCs for participants to access Internet. We managed to install 45 megabits dedicated link to the USA, via submarine cable just before INET97. It was among the first in this region and a big jump from our first link of 64 kbps via satellite in 1992.

Prior to INET, I used to travel around the world every six months to attend workshops among the pioneers of the Internet then, that was in the mid '80s. After that, the grouping became bigger and became INET Meeting. Today it became ICANN Meetings. So that is a long progress that I have been involved in the past.

ICANN|75
KUALA LUMPUR

The journey of my career, ladies and gentlemen, the journey of my career as the pioneer of Internet in Malaysia started when I first came across the word 'Internet', in 1983, while teaching at the University of Malaysia, my motivation was to address the issues related to the lack of interactive long-distance communications then. We only had telephones, telex and also telegrams, not the Telegram today, but the old telegram where you had to go to post office to send a short message and you were charged based on how many characters that you sent.

I was then excited with the possibility of having email and discussion group, participating in the discussion group. From there, my interest grew, in trying to implement the Internet. And at that time, only a few people were aware or interested in the Internet.

My experiment was then in just a computer room, and I was working alone. And unexpectedly it became the foundation of my career for the rest of my working life. Sometimes I am called the "Father of the Internet Malaysia", I would like to think that I was just an "Internet midwife".

The delivery was very challenging.   Internet codes then was buried in a tape of 4.2 BSD Unix. We were looking for an

opensource program then. I was working with a VAX minicomputer, equipped with a drum hard disk about a foot length, must be put in the clean room, the minicomputer was about the size of a washing machine today, and a half inch thick drive. There's a reel of tape, today we don't see that anymore.

First, I need to read around 2 kilobytes of bootstrap codes from the tape and transfer the control of the computer to this little program to read the rest of the tape and transfer to the hard disk. I can read that the first 2 kilobits but when I hand over, it stopped. So unfortunately, the bootstrap program expected a different model of the tape drive, and I ended up spending about a month modifying the driver of the tape drive using assembly code programming. Luckily, I had some experience in programming using binary codes for the first generation microprocessor, while studying in London a few years earlier.

So, when I moved to MIMOS, Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems in early 1985, I had more equipment, more stuff, and more people to help me and to implement wide area Internet connection. Strictly speaking, it was not Internet as we have today, it was not TCP/IP, it was UUCP, UNIX-to-UNIX Protocol, a copy protocol. Working together with several universities and local research institutions, there were some concerns from people who were worried about sharing their

million Ringgit computers. They could not appreciate the benefits of global communication and knowledge sharing. Naturally, there were also concerns about security.

I had also an opportunity to interact with others to – which I mentioned earlier, to learn about how to get the Internet connections done. This is how I learned. In 1986 we considered the Pilot Network was done, that enabled a few organizations to participate in the network, just using a telephone line as a dedicated telephone line for connectivity with one organization to others.

In 1987 I was entrusted by IANA to manage the .my domain on behalf of Malaysia. And the management of this .my was handed over to MYNIC Berhad in 2006. That was almost 20 years later. Currently, MYNIC plays a crucial role as the registry and the registrar, and the sole administrator of .my domain in Malaysia. MYNIC is dynamically expanding its parts to engage with local and global communities, to realize the value of .my.

MYNIC is currently active in accelerating small businesses and conducting an initiative to empower Malaysia entrepreneurs to adopt a holistic online presence. MYNIC is also in the midst of opening up the registration of .my domain name to the global

market and will run a pilot test in Q4 of this year. It is expected to open its registration to the rest of the world in 2023, next year.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Malaysian government, specifically the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia, has always tried to work towards building an inclusive, sustainable and accessible digital ecosystem. This is being done through various initiatives covering both access and adoptions. We have had the National Fiberisation and Connectivity Plan (NFCP), which has been replaced with the National Digital Network or Jalinan Digital Negara (JENDELA) initiative, aims to improve the coverage and quality of broadband.

On the 5G front, Malaysia is approaching it using a Single Whole Network Model. Whether it's going through or not, time will tell, so that is something that sometimes the debate is quite hard. Anyways, I won't touch on that.

In 2021, Malaysia saw the importance of the Internet as we embarked on global digital economy and set forth in defining and recognizing the Internet as a "third utility". This new policy sets forth additional fundamental human rights for Malaysians apart from water and electricity. It is a defining moment for Malaysia.

To implement this "third utility" policy, it is my personal view that we need to have a common and shared fiberoptic infrastructure in all populated areas. Duplications of expensive infrastructure, such as fiber and towers, can be minimized. All premises (residential, commercial and industrial) and any telecommunication towers should be within a half km from a fiberoptic route. Services such as FTTH, 4G, 5G and WiFi can be competitively offered by retail service providers. Cost to the end-users would be lower and quality of services would be higher. Digital divide can be eliminated.

And also, to realize this policy objective, a meaningful competitive environment should be in place. We should strive to level the playing field to enable the small players to compete effectively and provide end-users with more choices, it can be expected to be more innovative.

Certain laws and regulations may have to be changed. If we keep doing something in the same way, we cannot expect a different result, so we have to change. I know these pose considerable challenges, but Malaysia is steadfast in ensuring that the future for the Malaysians can be realized by being dynamic and agile in ensuring that access to the Internet reaches all citizens.

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that this 75th ICANN meeting is an excellent avenue and opportunity for the Internet community to discuss complex and challenging issues in an open, collaborative and constructive manner. I am confident that these six-days discussions will be fruitful and beneficial. Lastly, I would like to thank ICANN and the co-organizers for providing me with this platform to welcome you, and I hope you can spare some time to enjoy Malaysian hospitality. Thank you very much.

[applause]

JIA-RONG LOW: Thank you, Dr. Mohamed.

Now, please join me to welcome the next speaker, the Chair of the Number Resource Organization (NRO) Executive Council, Paul Wilson.

PAUL WILSON: Good morning, [non-English word or phrase]. I am Paul Wilson from APNIC, the Regional Internet Address Registry for this region, the Asia Pacific. It's an honor to be here among members of the APNIC community, especially, but also for the Internet Numbers community, as the Chair of the NRO, the Number Resource Organization, which is an organization that serves the

five regional Internet address registries. So, thank you to Maarten and Göran for this, for allowing the numbers perspective to be shared with the names community here, which after all makes up the majority of ICANN, perhaps 99.9 percent by my own rough estimation.

We "numbers" really are the one percent in the room here, but I would like to bear in mind that across our community we hold meetings like this one, 10 per year, attracting maybe 6,000 or 8,000 people in total every year. I've actually just came from APNIC 54 in Singapore, which we hosted along with the Asia Pacific regional IGF and the School on Internet Governance, said it was a great week with close to a thousand people, online and on-site, and I think that after two and a half years away, the level of energy and engagement at that event really was at top level, it was great, really great to see.

Because, in one sense, our lives have been on hold for the last two and a half years, but as we all know, life has gone on and we've got the Internet to thank for that, for many reasons which we all know, not least the cooking skills that we might have gained as Jia-Rong mentioned. But more than most, it's the communities of the RIRs who actually build the Internet itself, who have been extremely busy because their collective work, as we all know, really is mission critical these days for the human race.

ICANN|75
KUALA LUMPUR

In serving that community of the network operators, the RIRs also have a lot to do with strengthening registry services, we're looking after the resilience of that system, we're looking after the move towards better routing system security and serving a growing address transfer market amongst many other things, and much of this is actually a joint project work, which is where the NRO comes in, because the NRO helps us to coordinate all the of those things and to represent those joint efforts in places like this.

So, with all these going on, what none of the RIRs has really needed extra go ahead at this time, extra distraction or worries from what we have to do, but unfortunately one of our number has been facing quite a lot of that, during the last year or so, and that is the one that arguably is probably least able to absorb the extra burden and overhead, I am talking about AFRINIC.

And what I am going to do now is to give the rest of this short time slot to the CEO of AFRINIC, to give you an update about developments in his part of the world, and that is Eddy Kayihura, AFRINIC CEO, he is right here. So, thanks to you all, thanks to the hosts and to the sponsors, of course, and over to you, Eddy. Thank you.

[applause]

EDDY KAYIHURA: Thank you, Paul. Good morning. I am Eddy, the CEO of AFRINIC, the Regional Internet Registry for Africa and the Indian Ocean.

I have been leading AFRINIC since 2019, and it has been an interesting and eventful journey. I applied to AFRINIC's CEO position because I saw firsthand how this organization really made a difference in the digital space, in Rwanda, where I come from. I have been part of this ecosystem since 2006, when I first attended AFRINIC in Kenya and I have been passionately involved and committed since then. I have even been a fellow of the ICANN meeting in 2011, in Dakar. I woke up for the morning briefing very early but still enjoyed the experience. 'I've no choice, they still do the same these days.

And I encourage fellows and newcomers to take part in this journey, as it can lead you to places you never dreamed of. As Paul said, numbers are a very small part of this community, but they are an essential part of the Internet resources ecosystem. Without proper, stable and secure management of number resources, names just cannot resolve. Some of you have heard about the multiple challenges that AFRINIC is facing as an organization. And if you don't know about these challenges, that

is good, but I think you should be aware of them and create some discernment about them.

For those who might not know, we are currently in the middle of multiple legal cases documented on our website. But today I want to appreciate the importance of a working multistakeholder model at the global level and to encourage each one of us to think what outcome we want from all of this. Let me stress that this is not only about AFRINIC as an organization, this is about the Internet in Africa, and I am here to suggest that this is also about a working registry system that we all depend on. And this is about a stable global Internet; hence, this is also about ICANN and its community.

Allow me to give an example of a situation that proved to us the resilience of a multi-stakeholder community. Last year, for two months and a half, our bank accounts were frozen by a court decision. The level of pressure that we had faced could have paralyzed the organization and impacted the stability of the Internet, it was a very critical situation.

The existing mechanism at NRO, in the form of stability fund, was an insurance that the system will be able to cope with this pressure, and these funds could have sustained us for over a year. In the end, that was not even needed. Our Internet ecosystem is

ICANN|75
KUALA LUMPUR

so well done that different layers of community support started to kick in, with much solidarity from different parts of our membership and community.

Even when our bank accounts were frozen, we continued to honor our key commitment and never stopped providing services. Surely, it was a challenging moment, but AFRINIC continued to provide services non-stop. As I said early, we are in the middle of multiple legal cases and we trust and respect the decisions of the court. However, there is no question that AFRINIC, the regional Internet registry for Africa and the Indian Ocean, needs to continue operating and delivering services with no interruption. This is essential for the Internet.

The stability of this ecosystem is a community matter, it is part of the global ecosystem. And we appreciate the support from ICANN, always. The world continues to evolve and so does our bottom-up environments with new challenges, as we have heard multiple stories of the pioneers of the Internet. The pioneers of the Internet built this system in a manner that would prevent capture, and we ought to strive to keep things as such.

Our governance structure and processes can only improve and become stronger. The only way to achieve it is through community participation. We, at AFRINIC, also commit to

continue to provide the best services possible to our region and we will continue to encourage community participation towards a stronger registry for the African region and Indian ocean.

I would like to end thanking for you the opportunity to share this story, as part of the number's community. [non-English word or phrase]

[applause]

JIA-RONG LOW: Thank you, Eddy. We've now arrived at the first highlight of this session, the new addition to our Welcome Ceremony, the presentation of the Dr. Tarek Kamel award for Capacity Building. We introduced this award in January 2020, however, as we only had virtual Annual General Meetings in the past two years, this will be the first in-person presentation of this award. That means invite Maarten back on stage to tell us more.

Maarten, please.

[applause]

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: It is truly an honor to present this award. This award, that has been established by the ICANN Board in honor of the late Dr. Tarek Kamel, an Internet pioneer known for his contributions to the Global Internet Governance and also a good friend to many of us, an inspiration for those who knew him well.   This award recognizes members of the ICANN community who have made significant contributions to national, regional, or global capacity development programs related to ICANN's mission. In previous years, the ICANN Board selected Ramanou Biaou and Satish Babu as the recipients of the award in 2020 and 2021, respectively.

After considering a number of very worthy candidates proposed by the community, and considering the significance of contributions to national, regional, and global capacity building programs related to ICANN's mission and achievements in developing capacity building programs that positively influenced the Multistakeholder Model and diversified participation at the ICANN, they achieved consensus on the winner in 2022. And I'm very pleased to announce that the recipient of this year's award is Wolfgang Kleinwächter.

[applause]

Wolfgang is a long-time member of the ICANN community, who has held many roles in ICANN's community groups, including At-Large and the GNSO. He was also a member of the ICANN Board

and the Nominating Committee. Wolfgang is Professor emeritus of the International Communications Policy And Regulation at the University of Aarhus in Denmark. And he's been involved in Internet Governance since the early 1990's.

Over time, he developed a number of activities in capacity developing, including founding the Summer School on Internet Governance and European Dialogue on Internet Governance and this inspired many others to move with that. With this award, the ICANN Board recognizes Wolfgang's significant efforts over his lifetime in capacity building locally, regionally, and globally. So, congratulations, Wolfgang.

[applause]

And thank you for your many contributions to the Internet community, and thank you for joining us via Zoom during the night time. What does this award mean to you?

WOLFGANG KLEINWAECHTER: Thank you very much, Maarten, and good morning to Kuala Lumpur. Here in Germany is very early morning, it's 4:00 in the morning. And let me say some words. You know, capacity building is the natural responsibility of an academic person, but if it comes to capacity building and internet governance in

academic institutions, there is a difficulty because academic institutions are organized around disciplines. You can go to a law school, to a business school, you can study information science or political science, but Internet governance is a multi-disciplinary phenomenon.

So when I started a master course in 1997 on internet policy and regulation, this was really an experiment, but it worked because it reflected what we call in Germany the zeitgeist and I could use all the experiences in the discussion on the World Summit on the Information Society where I served also in the UN Working Global Internet Governance where a lot of academics argued in the conversation with government representatives that capacity building is a priority, and you cannot take decisions if you do not understand the issues on the table. So, this has paved the way to the Internet Governance Forum.

And when we had a UNESCO sponsored meeting in 2006, nearly 20 years ago, about the follow-up on the Tunis Agenda, we produced two ideas. One was for research which is now known as the GIGANET and the other one was for education, and this became the Summer School where I organized the pilot project in Meissen and insofar, thank you very much for this award, because my thanks goes to all the friends and supporters who enabled us

to do this great capacity building program with the summer school in Meissen whichstarted in 2007.

So this includes [non-English word or phrase] and [non-English word or phrase] sitting in the machine room, this includes a number of faculty members, and it includes also the supporters and sponsors, and many of them are members of the ICANN community like DENIC, like [indiscernible] like SWITCH, like NICRT, like RIPE NCC, like ISOC and CGI.br, and in previous times also, CIRA, auDA, DotAsia, Afilias, and [inaudible – 00:54:46], and many, many others. So, without this support, this could not have happened.

And this summer school in Meissen was really an inspiration also for others, you know it happened with Larson and Olga Cavalli, a member of the faculty in Meissen created the South School on Internet Governance through Anriette Esterhuysen and recently the African School of Internet Governance, we heard that there is now an Asia Pacific School of Internet Governance, Glenn organized a Virtual School of Internet Governance and we are now more than 25 schools of Internet governance around the globe which are collaborating under the umbrella of the Internet Governance Forum in a dynamic coalition of schools on Internet governance. So more than 1,000 fellows every year are learning

in a multistakeholder environment, and these are the Internet governance leaders of tomorrow.

Finally, let me add a very personal remark to Tarek. So, I had known Tarek since the 1990's. We became friends when he was the Chair and president of ISOC Egypt. When he became the minister in Egypt, he invited me to a business meeting in Cairo and he helped also to launch the Arab School on Internet Governance at the eve of the IGF in Sharm El Sheikh in 2009. And when he lost his job in Egypt, I invited him to the ICANN student [inaudible – 00:56:22] in Oslo and I was very happy to see that Tarek did find a new home in the ICANN family.

So we had a lot of values on the free, open, interoperable and unfragmented safe and stable Internet and the multistakeholder model. We had a lot of ideas, a lot of plans and a lot of visions. And we shared also the pain of the experiences of very bad illness, cancer. So, I shared my optimism with him, and I always hoped that he will win the battle, but unfortunately, he lost.

So, my thoughts are with Tarek. My thanks go to ICANN that it created the Dr. Tarek Kamel award, and I am very proud and very thankful that I am this year's winner. Thank you very much.

[applause]

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Thank you, Wolfgang, it is a pleasure and honor to know you and to present this award to you, and we will make sure it finds its way to your home in Germany. All the best wishes from all of us.

JIA-RONG LOW: Thank you, Maarten, and congratulations again, Professor Wolfgang.

Now, it's time for the second highlight, it's cultural performance time. Today we have with us the Malaysian Drum Symphony. This performance showcases the diversity of the Malaysian culture heritage. You can see various instruments on stage here. Although different in size, origins and sounds, when orchestrated together, they form a beautiful melody that is uniquely Malaysian. It is a celebration of unity and diversity, and it reminds me of our Multistakeholder Model of governance. Please join me to welcome the Malaysian Drum Symphony.

[applause]

(Malaysian Drum Symphony performing)

Welcome!

ICANN|75
KUALA LUMPUR

[cheers and applause]

JIA-RONG LOW: The Malaysian Drum Symphony, everybody.

[cheers and applause]

Thank you for sharing the energy. Hopefully the energy will keep us upbeat throughout the rest of the week. Now, before we adjourn, here is a small logistical announcement. If you are attending to stay for the next session in the room, which will be the Q&A with the ICANN.org Executive Team, coffee break is available at the back of the room on my right, otherwise coffee break is also available at the usual stations on the third floor.

With that, this concludes the opening ceremony. Thank you, and have a great, energetic ICANN75. [non-English word or phrase]

[applause]

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]

ICANN|75
KUALA LUMPUR