Fadi Chehadé's Opening Speech

IGF 2013

Moderator:

The next speaker is Mr. Fadi Chehadé, President and CEO of ICANN.

Fadi:

Your Excellency's, and all of us. You, excellent ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. I want to start, really, by asking the permission of our chairman to ask the people in this room who are with APGI [Asia Pacific Governance Institute] and PANDI [Pengelola Nama Domain Internet Indonesia] to stand up because for those of us who saw what they did behind the scenes, it is to them the thanks goes for all of this.

So please, come on. Come on.

Together with the amazing Changetai Masango, from the Secretariat of the IGF, these are the people that work very hard in a multi-stakeholder fashion to bring this forum together, and really to them we owe the thanks. Thank you very, very much.

A year ago, I met many of you for the first time at the Baku event. This was the seventh IGF, and my first one. And at the time, if you remember, the big

challenge that was put on the table, which I shared with all of you would be my priority is to make ICANN a more international organization. ICANN was viewed very much as a, maybe, too much of a US-centric organization huddled up in Los Angeles, enjoying the California beaches, and asking the world always to come to ICANN.

We promised at the time that we would make ICANN go to the world. Today, I am happy to report to you, a year later, that ICANN has gone to the world. We have divided our headquarters into three operational hubs in the world. Los Angeles, Istanbul, and Singapore. The hubs are open, operating legally with employees in them and operations working around the clock.

We have also opened engagement centers in China, in Montevideo, and I just came from India where we announced the first Center of Excellence in the world for DNS security in partnership with the leading research organizations in India.

This is just the beginning.

Then we expanded ICANN, and we told our team to start moving out of Los Angeles. Our head of global policy is now based in Istanbul. Our next head of technology will be based in Singapore. I myself, with my family, will be moving to Singapore in January, and then back to Istanbul in May. So we, today, have an

organization that, from the inside out, is changing our center of gravity to be a global organization.

But that's not enough.

We're clear that truly international organizations must also change many things. Not just their operational posture, but also, potentially over time, their legal posture. So while we are a California operation today, there is nothing that precludes us being also, in addition to that, a legal organization in other places. And we intend to do that in order to make ICANN a more international organization.

We also believe that our commitment to the world should be indeed to the world, not to any particular stakeholder, and we will work towards that and change that.

These fundamental changes must happen because the current status quo is not sustainable. But we must do this with care. We must do this wisely. Because the security, stability and reliability of the Internet must remain our number one job. Because all of us depend on it. So we will do this, but we will do it as a community. We will work together, and we will get there.

And finally, as part of our international focus, I am happy to announce today a very important piece of news. Today, for the first time in the history of the

Internet, ICANN has announced that the first new Arabic, Russian and Chinese top-level domains has been sent to be delegated to the Root of the Internet. This is good news for the world, and good news for all of us. And also for my aunt in Egypt who can now type in an entire domain in Arabic because she doesn't even have an English keyboard. So this is good for all of us. It's good for the users of the Internet, and we will keep doing what we need to do to make ICANN, and the Internet, a global place.

Today is also a good time to talk about a new season for the Internet. As ICANN becomes more international, Internet governance needs to become also a global affair. Just today and yesterday I had bi-laterals in which many governments were coming to us and saying, 'We're finally embracing the need for our country and our government to be part of the multi-stakeholder effort, to make the Internet a better place.' So Internet governance is becoming everyone's interest, and that's a good thing.

However, it could turn badly. It could end of being the affair of a few governments, and we all agree that while governments are central to Internet governance, governments alone can not govern the Internet. Governance must partner with all stakeholders in the spirit of the IGF to create solutions that are multi-stakeholder. Governments, civil society, technical organizations, industry and businesses together. Together, on an equal footing as the Tunis agenda

said. On an equal footing, we'll govern the Internet, and we'll make it a better place for all of us.

So today, I see nothing but good things ahead of us. I think this community is clear that the multi-stakeholder approach is a good approach. And as we look to the 2014 events, we look at great opportunities for us to work together to ensure that we do not, as the representative of the EU parliament said, we do not create yet another major new organization. We don't need more organizations. We have good institutions. We should empower them, we should give them the ability to work together, to cooperate with all governments and all stakeholders together on an equal footing. These are good news.

So let's, together, focus on what needs to be done. There's a lot of work to be done, but we are committed. ICANN, IETF, ISOC – and you'll hear from their leaders – the regional registries, and many of the business organizations, many of the civil society organizations together, together. Working with our governments, we can make this happen.

Finally, I just would like to say, we are here to engage with each other. Let's use this week to really be open to engage. Our minister from Brazil presented a very courageous new offer for all of us to engage. I thank him and I thank Brazil for their readiness to come here and engage the multi-stakeholder community and invite us all to a multi-stakeholder dialogue. Not Brazil-centered, not ICANN-

centered. An open multi-stakeholder dialogue. We thank you for the invitation, and we will respond to it Minister Bernardo, because that's the spirit of the multi-stakeholder IGF.

The continent I come from, Africa, has a proverb that says, 'If you want to go fast, go alone. But if you want to go far, go together.' So let's go together.

Thank you.

Moderator:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chehadé.