

6 June 2016

NEXT STEPS IN RECONCILING GAC ADVICE AND GNSO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO RED CROSS AND IGO ACRONYM IDENTIFIERS

Dr. Steve Crocker
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors

Dear Dr. Crocker,

This letter is a follow up on the most recent correspondence on this subject, between the Board's New gTLD Program Committee (NGPC) and our predecessors on the GNSO Council. These exchanges, dating from September 2014¹ and January 2015, concerned the reconciliation of GAC advice and GNSO policy recommendations on protections for Red Cross identifiers and International Governmental Organization acronyms. There have been no further developments on this issue and in light of the recent wish expressed by the GAC (in its Marrakech Communique) to see the matter resolved, the GNSO Council is seeking an update from the Board to enable next steps to be undertaken on this matter.

The GNSO Council leadership met with representatives from the Red Cross during ICANN 55 in Marrakech and as a result of these discussions, the Red Cross was invited to attend the GNSO Council meeting on 14 April 2016, to brief the Council on the specific nature of the Red Cross' request for permanent protections of its National Society names and its international movement names and acronyms (IFRC and ICRC)². One point emphasized during this briefing was that the international legal basis for protections of Red Cross identifiers is significantly different from that for IGOs. While that may be the case, the Red Cross and IGO identifier issues relate to recommendations that came out of a single GNSO PDP and were sent as such to the Board, and we therefore request that both be addressed in tandem.

In this regard, the previous discussions between our Council predecessors and the NGPC had resulted in an understanding that the Council will consider initiating a process for amending policy recommendations only when there is further clarity as to the nature and scope of any potential policy amendments that might be proposed by the ICANN Board. It is our understanding that a proposal concerning protection for IGO acronyms was being developed by representatives of various IGOs, the Board and the GAC—this, to our knowledge, has not borne any result to date.

¹ The exchange of letters followed an initial discussion between the Council and Mr. Chris Disspain in September 2014. The Council subsequently sent this letter: <http://gns0.icann.org/en/correspondence/robinson-to-chalaby-disspain-07oct14-en.pdf>, and the following response was sent by the NGPC: <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/correspondence/chalaby-to-robinson-15jan15-en.pdf>.

² The presentation that the Red Cross made to the Council at the meeting can be viewed at <http://gns0.icann.org/en/correspondence/curtet-to-gns0-council-14apr16-en.pdf>.

The GNSO Council has not yet conducted further deliberations on these topics beyond the recent presentation by the Red Cross representatives, and does not intend to do so until we receive further specific input from the Board. In the interests of resolving these issues in the near term, we would greatly appreciate an update on this matter and specifically request an opportunity for the ICANN Board and the GNSO Council to meet during the Helsinki meeting to discuss these issues

With best regards,

Donna Austin, GNSO Vice-Chair (Contracted Parties House)
James Bladel, GNSO Chair
Heather Forrest, GNSO Vice-Chair (Non-Contracted Parties House)

