

## **LACRALO's position on the document "How We Meet: A discussion Paper for community dialogue".**

Following the reading of the document issued by ICANN's Policy Development and Advisory Team on July 8, 2024 under the title: "How We Meet: A discussion paper for community dialogue", LACRALO has discussed this document after a detailed reading and intends in this document to express its outlooks in order to contribute to the open debate proposed therein, which allows in a frank debate to provide solutions to collaborate in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our face-to-face and hybrid meetings.

In principle, we understand that this topic deserves, due to its importance, to have a detailed study of the costs, as accurate as possible, incurred by ICANN in each movement of face-to-face meetings in order to obtain a complete picture of which are, from our perspective, the unnecessary or superfluous costs and which are essential to optimize our meetings and give greater effectiveness and efficiency to the face-to-face participation.

We understand that "how we meet" is only one component and a derivative of "how we work", an issue that we will immediately submit for discussion in our community.

We understand that part of the responsibility that our participation merits is to request all pertinent information in order to be able to have an informed and complete opinion on the issues that we must analyze.

We also understand that this document is not a complaint but a statement of principles on the part of our At-Large.

We maintain that the participation of Internet end users is an investment and not an expense, and that LACRALO having produced substantive contributions to the development of essential ICANN policies, it is from this perspective that we commit ourselves to our duty to represent an active and lively community that enriches the ICANN ecosystem and seeks a stable, resilient, secure and interoperable Internet, our contribution

to the issues we address and address in order to provide our recommendations to the ICANN Board.

Beyond this, and awaiting this sensitive information, we understand that there are issues that need to be looked at carefully when making decisions, since at first we wondered how these budget cuts would impact the experience of the participants of the Fellowship, NextGen or even Newcomers programs or any person or entity that wishes to get involved in ICANN through the stakeholder groups as well as in the volunteer community of Internet end users. In our opinion, the programs that involve interaction with volunteers and/or new volunteers are the ones that should be the least altered.

The fact of being able to participate in person in ICANN's annual meetings, transmits and enhances experiences, knowledge, skills, tools, as well as networking, which allows the formation of new opportunities such as business, labor, academic, etc. In this sense, everything acquired can then be transferred in a more professional and accurate way to the ICANN ecosystem and even to our structure that represents the end users of the Latin American and Caribbean region, providing the appropriate scenario for enriching debates about the Internet infrastructure. Consequently, this results in a benefit for ICANN, leading to better and more complete policies with a positive effect on all stakeholder groups, which is why ICANN's face-to-face meetings, whether they are Community Forum, Policy Forum or Annual General Meeting, are invaluable. Thus, it is clear that the experience of participating in face-to-face meetings cannot be exchanged for a virtual meeting.

As we always say: we are the weakest link in a chain of economic power, we work on a par with any member of the community and therefore we should be the ones most protected from budget cuts.

In this line, it is worth noting the Multistakeholder Model, the heart and hallmark of this vast community that is ICANN, where all the voices of the different parties that make up the community are heard, and where a policy of equality must prevail within this Model.

We understand, in a first approach to the issue under debate, that restricting access to Face to Face participation is not the way to provide a solution to the issue in question.

In this regard, we believe that there are items that could be addressed in terms of efficiency and cost optimization. For example, dispensing with first or business class tickets for flights, meetings outside of the three annual meetings, cocktail parties or galas organized with ICANN resources, quality of hotels of all Constituencies and Boards, etc., as well as a stricter and more exhaustive control by ICANN over the contracted Travel Agency during the process of selection, issuance and use of airline tickets, looking for more viable, sustainable and economic options that imply the optimization of costs and time without losing sight of effectiveness.

Some of the topics we could refer to (these are just ideas without being able to base them on the economic report we have previously requested) could be:

- 1. Accommodations:** Conduct excellent negotiations with hotel chains in order to reduce costs; Subscription to loyalty or rewards programs that allow access to exclusive discounts and benefits; Lodging in less expensive hotel chains; Search for greater sponsorship.
- 2. Efficient transportation:** Economy class tickets for all participants of all Constituencies including the Board, with the exception of those requiring different treatment, as well as subscription to loyalty or rewards programs with airlines.
- 3. Efficient scheduling:** Optimize the agenda of meetings and correctly manage the timing of each meeting to minimize travel time and stay.
- 4. Collaboration with organizations:** Collaborate with local organizations to obtain discounts or logistical support.
- 5. Operational efficiency:** Implement more efficient processes to reduce operating costs. By way of illustration, explore various options during the selection of suppliers of food,

beverages, souvenirs provided during meetings, breaks, cocktails, as well as the transportation used, considering prices, quality of goods and services.

Notwithstanding all of the above, it is worth noting that in this immense structure that is ICANN, it is possible not only to outline recommendations of a strictly travel-related nature for face-to-face meetings, but also other proposals of a different nature.

These options can help to reduce costs without affecting the face-to-face participation of user representatives in ICANN's annual meetings, as well as contribute to designing a better, lasting, efficient, effective and sustainable participation of the community from an integral approach.