TITLE:	**ICANN71 In-Person Cancellation PROPOSED**
ACTION:	**For Board Consideration and Approval**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

With the ongoing global pandemic, there remain far too many areas of uncertainty to proceed with ICANN71 as an in-person meeting. The challenges include uncertainties related to the ability and willingness of international participants to travel; whether a meeting of our size will be allowed; whether the physical distancing requirements that could be required by the host country are possible to implement; the impact if a case was diagnosed among participants; and the progress of the "second wave" of the virus. As a result, ICANN org, after discussion with SO/AC leaders, recommends that the Board cancel ICANN71 as an in-person meeting and direct ICANN org to proceed to convene ICANN71 as ICANN's virtual Policy Forum.

ICANN ORG RECOMMENDATION:

ICANN org, after discussion with SO/AC leaders, recommends that the Board cancel ICANN71 as an in-person meeting and direct ICANN org to proceed to convene ICANN71 as ICANN's virtual Policy Forum.

BACKGROUND:

ICANN org, through the Adaptive Crisis Management Team (A-CMT) on COVID-19, prepared background materials that are attached to this paper as Annex A. Financial considerations are in Annex B.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

Whereas, on 3 May 2019, the ICANN Board approved for ICANN organization to proceed to contracting in support of ICANN71 in The Hague, Netherlands (https://www.icann.org/resources/board-material/resolutions-2019-05-03-en#1.c).

Under the Meetings Strategy, and in accordance with the Bylaws, ICANN71 is scheduled as ICANN's Policy Forum for 2021.

Whereas, the ICANN Board is responsible for a decision to change an ICANN public meeting location once such a meeting location has been approved for contracting and announced.

Whereas, in December 2019, a new strain of coronavirus, referred to as COVID-19, emerged and on 11 March 2020 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). Globally, a high number of people either have been or continue to be under some form of a "stay-at-home" or lock-down order, directed to avoid contact with others except to receive essential services such as medical care or to purchase supplies. Schools and offices are starting to reopen in limited measures, gatherings are still greatly limited and international travel remains largely on pause. We still do not know when international travel will be more fully restored, or if size limitations on gatherings will be appropriately sized and feasible for ICANN's in-person public meetings. When faced with new emergences of COVID-19, many economies have re-imposed some form of "stay-at- home" orders to once again control the spread.

Whereas, as an organization with staff and stakeholders across the globe, in January 2020 ICANN org convened an Adaptive Crisis Management Team (A-CMT) to assist ICANN org in tracking and mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on ICANN's work.

Whereas, ICANN org, through the A-CMT, briefed the Board on the current status of COVID-19 on ICANN's work, including the potential impacts on ICANN71. ICANN org has also consulted with the leadership teams of the various ICANN community structures – our Advisory Committees, Supporting Organizations, Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies – regarding the planning for ICANN71 in the face of the pandemic.

Whereas, the Board recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact other planned opportunities for the ICANN community to further their work in-person, with ICANN67, ICANN68, ICANN 69, ICANN70 and all other face-to-face meetings moved to a virtual format. ICANN org has been in communication with the ICANN community

on these scheduled changes.

Whereas, at this time, it does not appear possible or feasible to convene an in-person ICANN71 in The Hague, Netherlands as planned.

Whereas, ICANN org successfully moved ICANN67, ICANN68 and ICANN69 to virtual meetings, providing substantial experience for the ICANN community on how to plan, schedule and execute ICANN Public Meetings in a fully virtual setting, including enhanced accessibility through the streaming delivery of high-interest sessions on YouTube. Further enhancements are planned for ICANN70.

Whereas, ICANN org reports to the Board that it continues both its internal operational planning as well as consultation with the community on how to best design a Policy Forum that achieves the intended purpose and that supports the community's ongoing policy advice and development work.

Whereas, the Board welcomes the ongoing collaboration between the Chairs of ICANN's Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees and ICANN org, to put in place a set of agreed community guidelines that will help to ensure continuity, consistency, transparency, and accountability of decisions made on behalf of the community by its designated representatives who work with ICANN org to plan ICANN's Public Meetings. As ICANN Public Meetings and the support provided to the community for them must continue to facilitate progress on important policy, technical and implementation work, the Board looks forward to receiving the final guidelines as soon as feasible, to allow for their application as early as the planning for ICANN71.

Whereas, the Board understands the importance of the face-to-face interactions as provided for at ICANN's Public Meetings and looks forward to a return to those interactions as soon as feasible.

Resolved (2021.03.11.xx), the Board confirms that ICANN71 shall not proceed as an in-person meeting, and directs the ICANN President and CEO, or his designees, to take all steps necessary to cancel the facilities and arrangements made for an in-person meeting in

The Hague, Netherlands.

Resolved (2021.03.11.xx), the Board directs the ICANN President and CEO, or his designees, to coordinate with the ICANN community on the best way forward for ICANN71 to meet the expected outcomes of an ICANN Policy Forum, including the furthering of ICANN policy development and advice work, reporting on milestones and community-agreed priorities for the meeting. The ICANN President and CEO is also directed to continue internal operational planning in order to support the delivery of the ICANN71 Policy Forum as a virtual meeting as appropriate to achieve those expected outcomes.

Resolved (2021.03.11.xx), the Board thanks ICANN org and the ICANN community for their attention to this important issue. The Board also thanks the hosts and venues planned for ICANN71 in The Hague, Netherlands for their understanding of the need to cancel the in-person plans for ICANN71. We hope that there is a future time that we will be able to come and visit your city to host an ICANN Public Meeting.

Resolved (2021.03.11.xx), the Board appreciates the community's continued commitment to the work and mission of ICANN, and is grateful to the Chairs of our Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees for their collaboration and leadership. The Board agrees that documenting the role and responsibilities of the community's designated representatives who work with ICANN org on planning for ICANN Public Meetings will greatly facilitate continuity and consistency in this important work, and allow for transparency and accountability of the decisions that are made.

PROPOSED RATIONALE FOR RESOLUTION:

The Board takes this action today as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, considered a pandemic by the World Health Organization. While the Board recognizes and upholds the value of face-to-face interactions at ICANN's Public Meetings, and the advancement of ICANN community work that happens at these meetings, we cannot move forward with an in-person meeting at the cost of the health of attendees, ICANN org staff members, and the host country.

At the time of the Board decision, the COVID-19 outbreak continues in almost all parts of the world, with work on therapeutics and vaccines proceeding. Each day, there is updated news on the spread of the virus and the worldwide response. Globally, a high number of people either have been or continue to be under some form of a "stay-at-home" or lock-down order, directed to avoid contact with others except to receive essential services such as medical care or to purchase supplies. Across ICANN org, all offices remain closed (except for essential items) and personnel are working from home. Those with school-aged children are expected to care for and, in many cases, take on the education of their children. Many within the ICANN community are experiencing these same impacts. Many may also be dealing with infection amongst their family and friends. The pandemic continues to impact us all.

After the Board's February 2020 decision to cancel the in-person component of ICANN67 and direct ICANN org to proceed with a virtual meeting, a virtual ICANN67 was convened. Many valuable lessons were learned from that experience, and ICANN org then proceeded to consult with ICANN's Community Leaders about how to use the lessons from ICANN67 to design future virtual meetings as the pandemic might necessitate, taking into consideration the purpose of each Public Meeting. ICANN68, scheduled for 22-25 June 2020, and ICANN69, scheduled for 19-22 October 2020 were successful ICANN Public Meetings planned and executed in a virtual format. ICANN70 will also be conducted as a virtual meeting.

Prior to taking this decision, the Board received briefings from ICANN org on areas including the impact of COVID-19, conversations with the ICANN community, and operational planning for a distributed meeting. ICANN org is unable to adequately plan on site for the meeting due to travel restrictions and does not have firm assurance that it could do so. Delaying the decision also could impose additional costs, such as initiating equiptment shipping that might later be deemed unnecessary, or continuing to enter into the contracts needed to support a meeting, which if cancelled could incur penalties to ICANN. These are additional ways that cancelling early preserve ICANN resources to be used for serving ICANN's mission.

We thank the ICANN community for its commitment to concluding a successful ICANN67, ICANN68 and ICANN69 in virtual formats. The ICANN community has shown great leadership already in a global move toward virtual collaboration.

The ICANN Board thanks the Municipality of The Hague and The Hague Convention Bureau for their support. We appreciate their understanding and look forward to conducting a future ICANN Meeting in The Hague.

This action is within ICANN's mission and the public interest, as it is the only path to assure that the work of the ICANN community continues as planned. It is the proper decision on many levels, from not putting ICANN org staff at risk, or risking the need to divert the resources and attention of ICANN org to a response to a COVID-19 outbreak amongst ICANN org or the community; to taking a responsible and proper measure to protect against contributing to the global pandemic. Given the potential inequities in participants' access to international travel and visas across regions, this decision also ensures the broadest participation of attendees by virtual means without the potential distraction of uncertainties posed by hosting an in-person meeting at this time.

This decision has resource implications that are being quantified. However, the resources needed to support an ICANN71 Policy Forum as can be appropriately designed are expected to be within or below the resources that have already been allocated for ICANN71 within ICANN's budget. This decision has no impact on the security, stability, or resiliency of the Internet's DNS.

This is an organizational administrative decision that does not require public comment.

Submitted by: Göran Marby
Position: ICANN President and CEO

Annex A to Board Briefing: ICANN71 – The Hague, Netherlands

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