
MONTREAL – A Tribute to Tarek Kamel
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BRAD WHITE:

Welcome to all of you, including those joining remotely. I'm Brad White. I'm Director of Communications for North America. Thank you for being with us this evening for what we consider a very special session. I want to note that interpretation for this session is available in Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish, and Russian, so please feel free to pick up a headset at the back of the room.

Tonight we want to celebrate and remember the life of our friend and colleague, Tarek Kamel, who impacted so many people throughout his life. His family, his wife Iman, and his son Omar are here with us tonight. Please know you have the condolences of everyone in this room. Our hearts are with you.

The words of one of my favorite authors is very relevant tonight. Maya Angelou was a legendary U.S. civil rights activist, poet, and author. She once said, "People may forget what you said and what you did. They will always remember the way you made them feel." That brings us to Tarek, who did many great and historic things. But just as important was the way he made us feel.

I remember being at an ICANN meeting like this one some years ago where I was producing a public forum session that was particularly contentious. The community was expressing frustration and anger over several issues. The Board was feeling a little bit beaten up. At the end of

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the session, more than a few decided to vent their frustrations to me. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Tarek watching.

Later that evening, at a reception, one single person, Tarek, came up to me, patted me on the shoulder, and said, “Sometimes, I don’t know how you keep from crying.” Tonight I might not, by the way. I always remember that simple interaction because of the way he made me feel – like I mattered, like he understood, like he cared.

Tarek was subdued but you could always feel his confidence and his respect. He was an Internet pioneer who made important and lasting contributions to the development of then global Internet. He fearlessly shaped Egypt’s transition into a connect future and created opportunities for countless members of his country. He passionately believed that all should have access to the Internet and he spearheaded many initiatives to open access in Egypt and across the African continent.

Tarek was also a key figure in the ICANN community, as we all know, serving as a senior advisor to our CEO and as Senior Vice-President of Government Engagement. He was a powerful advocate for the multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance, and it is an extreme understatement to say he was respected around the world. By the time he came to ICANN, Tarek had already long been a towering figure in the Internet governance ecosystem. His presence with ICANN helped open many doors for organization.

But he was beloved not just for his professional accomplishments. He meant a great deal personally to our community across the world, and he served as a mentor to many.

Today we want to hear from as many of you as possible about what Tarek meant to you, your memories of Tarek, and his legacy on the global Internet. We've set up a microphone to my right over here. If you feel moved to speak, we'll be asking you to queue up behind the microphone in a few minutes. We want to hear your remembrances of man whose loss will be felt by all of us.

Video starts

GORAN MARBY:

Tarek Kamel was a friend and mentor and a [inaudible] to me. He was in many ways larger than life, and I was just luck to walk besides him for a while. I miss him dearly. As I know, my whole team is missing. We'll try to continue to work his spirit. That's the best we can do.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:

His work is his hobby and his team was always a second family to him. To me, he is a true mentor, a role model, a dear colleague, a sincere friend, and an elder brother. I can't forget the huge, huge bouquet of flowers when I was selected as a GAC Chair. He sent it all the way from Geneva to Cairo, and he was the hospital at the time. I already miss him so much, but we'll never forget him.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: He was a hero long before he joined ICANN. He was a founder of the Internet Society in Egypt. He was Minister of IT. He was easy to work with and, at the same time, very, very constructive and, as I said, precise in his thinking. He was just a real treasure and a truly nice guy.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I'm going to start from the end and in Arabic. You will be missed [inaudible] since 1992. Your contribution cannot be underestimated. I believe that what you had to go through after 2012 is a real example of somebody who fought for something that he believes in.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: He was one of the most thoughtful and enthusiastic young men I have ever met. When he became the Founding Chairman of the Internet Society of Egypt, I remember feeling relieved to know we had such a competent and enthusiastic person in charge, always humble, thoughtful, filled with good ideas, and always there to help, in spite of the many challenges that he had health-wise, among other things. So I will keep in mind all my wonderful memories of Tarek, and I'll keep thinking, whenever a hard problem comes up, "What would Tarek do?"

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: He had an infectious giggle, a great sense of humor, and a humility of spirit. He was my mentor, my boss, and I'm proud to say my friend. I remember with great affection his critical reliance on mint tea and multi-colored Post-It notes. Rest well, my friend. We will keep calm and carry on for you.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I personally remember him when I joined the Internet Governance and DNS community when I was young in earlier 2000. He was so welcoming. I always his smile and his warm attitude toward newcomers. He will greatly be missed by all of us, and his legacy will always be there.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE When I think of Tarek, I don't think of a particular moment or a memory. You see, Tarek and I grew up in the same city, Cairo. We went to the same university. We both studied the same subject, which is engineering. Then, when Tarek came to work for ICANN, we became very close friends. We spoke to each other sometimes almost every day. So Tarek has been part of my life, and that's why I don't have one single memory about him. I think of his life as a friend. Perhaps the one thing I will always remember is his smile. He always smiled and was always so nice and so welcoming. For that, I will always remember him.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I've learned a lot from him, from his technical knowledge as an Internet pioneer at a time when not many people knew what the Internet was or what it could do. He used to tell me he considered me his old brother. So now I miss my old brother. But I think what Tarek has accomplished in his very short life will live on for all of us to learn from and hopefully build on. You've fulfilled your mission in life, and we all love you.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: You did so much for the Internet, for the world, for ICANN, and for me. Quite simply, you helped me to be a better person. You were an incredible colleague, a wonderful teacher, and, perhaps most importantly, a close and wonderful friend. I'm going to miss you more than you know, but I feel so grateful that, for seven years, I was able to benefit from everything that you had to bring to me, to our colleagues, to ICANN, to our community, and to the world. You were the bravest man that I know. You went through so much and you never complained. We will take care of your memory. Please stay with me for as long as you can. Rest in peace, my friend.

Video ends

BRAD WHITE: What hits me watching that video is I don't think Tarek how to know how to give anyone a fake smile. Every smile was genuine and you could feel the warmth. It was real and it came through every time he smiled.

Before we turn to the floor to hear your memories of Tarek, we would like hear from some of Tarek's closest colleagues, some of whom you saw in that video and are taking the stage right now. These are colleagues and friends who've known him for years.

My colleague and a good friend of Tarek's, Baher Esmat, Vice-President of Stakeholder Engagement in the Middle East, will introduce the speakers. Baher?

BAHER ESMAT:

Thank you, Brad. I'd like for us to welcome [inaudible] and his family – his wife, Iman, his son, Omar. Thank you so much for joining s today. I would also like to introduce our panel today. I'll start with Cherine Chalaby (ICANN Board Chair), Goran Marby (ICANN President and GEO), Theresa Swinehart (Senior Vice-President for the Multi-Stakeholder Strategy and Strategic Initiatives), and Mandy Carver (Vice-President for Government Engagement.)

I'm going to start by sharing a few of my own memories and thoughts about Tarek. Tarek was my boss in my very first job back in 1993. He was leading a team of engineers who were working to bring the Internet to Egypt. I still remember him vividly as a young and so passionate technical leader who was very eager to learn and equally eager to transfer his knowledge to his team to empower them, to encourage them, to take initiatives and even make mistakes. He used to tell us, "Do whatever you want. Just try not to break things up, if you could."

I knew him in a few other capacities as a government official, advisor to the Minister of Communications and Information Technology, and later as a minister of communication and information technology. I knew him as a colleague at ICANN since he joined in 2012.

Perhaps the one thing I want to share about my time with Tarek at ICANN is how I rediscovered him. Before ICANN, Tarek was my boss, and, despite the long friendship, I couldn't think of him as anything but my boss. But at ICANN we had more time to interact mostly remotely. We didn't meet quite often, except in meetings, etc., but we used to communicate very often. I came to learn more about the human side of

Tarek. I knew that he was a strong and persevering personality, but I never thought that he would be as strong and brave as he was in the past years. Despite those years being the toughest in his life, I don't think all of us have ever seen him as peaceful as he was during those years.

We spoke a couple of times about this and I came to understand that it was peace that granted him the strength and the braveness to hold out his illness. It was this peace that also made him able to work hard and work until the very end. But he had done all this with a smile on his face. This is what I will remember forever. While talking about him, I also try to keep a smile on my face.

So these are a few memories about a friend and a colleague who I feel honored that I've known. With that, I would like to go to Mandy. Mandy, you also worked with Tarek, especially in the past few years. You were his deputy. I'm sure you have too many things to share.

MANDY CARVER:

Too many. I was privileged to be his deputy. I had the wonderful experience of when he came and joined ICANN. I was honored that he asked me to take on that role with him for government engagement. I think Manal said something that struck me in the video, which is that his work was his hobby. We sometimes joked that he was fluent in four different languages but didn't understand what vacation meant in any of them. I'm based on Los Angeles. He was in Geneva most of the time we worked together. So that nine-hour time difference was actually

helpful because he was a night owl. So it tended to balance out – the hours he wanted to work and when the office was running.

He was passionate about his work. This was important, but he was not self-important. He was the first one to laugh and to giggle actually. You'd be sitting with him in a meeting and something would come up and I could hear him start giggling and you're trying to be professional and not lose it. And he was a lot of fun to work with, and he talked so much.

There's a quote – I think it's a Christopher Isherwood quote – of, "At the end, it isn't our opinions that we leave behind but it's our example." He really did treat all comers with the same level of respect and interest. He believed everybody has something to contribute and that, even as much as he knew and as experienced as he was, he wanted to hear and learn from other people as well.

So that's the example that I will try and take forward. And the decency with which he treated everyone. It was really an anticipated event when he was going to come to the Los Angeles office because first he had to do a full tour and say hello to everyone. Everyone wanted to greet him when he came in.

BAHER ESMAT:

Thank you. Theresa, you too had worked with Tarek for several years. You both were members of the exec team, but you had also known him from before. What is your most vivid memory about him. Or some of the memories.

THERESA SWINEHART: A lot of memories and a lot of incredible memories. One is that he also enabled Baher to come and join ICANN, which was a very fond memory for all of us. He's a man from whom we learned a lot, and I think it's shown in the videos and in all the conversations and everybody who's here.

He made amazing qualities – integrity, humility, humor, strategic thinking (just to name a few) – but I think, over the years, it was his passion for the Internet and what it could accomplish that was really unbounded and really always struck me over the times: the engineer and diplomat who navigated through incredibly complex situations sometimes but also afforded opportunities.

In 2000, he chaired a committee to host the 2000 ICANN meeting – the fifth meeting that we had. It was a controversial time and it was, as I recall, also a controversial meeting. But he took it on and he took it on with just great energy and passion, navigating through complex areas.

On the personal side, I think it's the sparkle in his eyes that could motivate you to do anything. He'd come up with an idea and have a conversation and then you saw that sparkle and you knew this was going down that path. We've heard about his contagious laughter, which was priceless, and his passion and pride for his family, which he was just very committed to. There's stories we could share around that.

He brought people together, and he still does – that's evident here – irrespective of who we are or what our beliefs and values are. He was

able to bridge that boundary and, with that, able to take on challenges without fear but asking a lot of questions around it. He built out networks. He helped build out the network in Egypt in the region and helped put together AFRINIC for the continent. But it wasn't just the physical networks. It's also then people networks, as we've seen here and through all the tributes over time.

So I guess part of what I come away from all this thinking with is, over the years, the experience of seeing engage and seeing him interact and the values and the principles that he utilized in order to that. We learned from him. We continue to learn from him and, I think, take a little bit him into our hearts, into our work, into our daily lives. We'd be remiss not to do that.

I'm going to miss the conversations and I'm going to miss the guidance. I take morning walks and he was one of the people I would talk to on the morning walks. I'd be told what to do and what we needed to do and there was brainstorming going on. I'll miss that, but that was just a small thing over the years.

I want to say, Iman and Omar, who I know virtually – I was not physically present – thank you for sharing your husband and your father with us. It's really been a blessing. He's going to live on. I know I'm not the only one who's going to saying, as we've heard before, "What would Tarek have done or said?" As such, I think we will continue on.

With that, [inaudible].

BAHER ESMAT: Thank you, Theresa. I'm sure he's going to live on. Now I'm turning to Goran to tell us what he thinks his legacy will be at ICANN.

GORAN MARBY: I got to know Tarek the first time in 2009 when I joined the Swedish government and I went to [Charman Shake]. He was the minister. I met a couple of times during the years, but really I got to know him when I joined ICANN. He came up to me – I think we were in Barcelona – and he introduced himself and he said, “I work for you.” I didn't know what to say, actually. Everybody knew who he was. The fact that he was working for me felt very strange.

At that time, I also, through a friend of mine, heard that he wasn't sure that I needed his competence, which is probably one of the biggest jokes I ever heard. And he continued to say that. We became friends and it was fairly unlikely. I'm from Sweden. He was never on time, and I have this thing that I need to be on time.

But I want to be very personal with you. For the last couple of years, me and my family have endured three close relatives – two of my brothers and my mother – pass away from cancer. Tarek and myself even have different faiths, but he helped me through this period. We were aligned in our faiths. He was a devoted person in his faith. He shared with me and helped me.

I remember one time when we had a very long conversation about it when one of my brothers passed away. I asked him, “Where are you, by the way?” He was lying in a hospital bed for his treatment. The fact that

a person like Tarek walks on this earth and takes his time to help other people through other people’s sufferings helped me so much.

But I really want to go back to the Tarek spirit as such. He embodies for me what ICANN is about: the meeting of people, the respect of other opinions, sometimes the fighting. I’m probably one of the few who’ve seen Tarek angry. That was not a fun experience because I was at the other end of that. That’s when he tried to tell me how to behave. I think have many people have tried to and he didn’t reach that point either.

But he was a really strong person in that sense, that he believed in what we do. I will take with me – I think we all will take with us – if we sometimes think, when we go into an argument or we have a different opinion, to think to ourselves, “What would Tarek say?” Then we would giggle and we would say, “As such.”

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible]

GORAN MARBY: “Exactly “ is also the added word to that.

BAHER ESMAT: Thank you. Cherine, tell us about the first time you met Tarek.

CHERINE CHALABY: I knew of Tarek way before we met. He was a big personality in Egypt, particularly during the revolution of 2010 and ’11, where he took a very

big stand to support the open Internet under a lot of pressure to shut down the Internet. He was such a principled person. Sometimes he paid the price for these principles. So I knew of Tarek and I was following, because I was living outside of Egypt at that time, the events and I knew exactly what was happening. I was in awe of him.

Then, in 2012, he had left the ministry. I got a call from Egypt from a common friend of ours. He said, “Do you know that, after Tarek left Egypt, he’s in Europe now? He has been connected with a long time, and you are on the Board of ICANN. He would like to have a chat with you and see if there’s a possibility of him joining ICANN.” So I said, “Absolutely. I will speak to him.” So we connected and, when I spoke to him, I addressed him as Minister. I said, “Minister Kamel,” because that’s a sign of respect. I was a little bit nervous because I’d seen this big personality. When I left Egypt, I left Egypt as a student, no I’m not a known quantity in Egypt. But he was a very big personality.

So I said, “Minister Kamel,” etc., etc., “It’s a pleasure to talk to you.” He said, “Cherine [pasha].” “[Pasha]” is an endearing term in Egypt, which makes you feel at ease or valued by another person or endeared by another person. He immediately told me, “Cherine [pasha], shall we forget about these titles?” I said, “Well, Mr. Minister, I’m not going to forget but you can forget about the title.”

Needless to say, ever since then, every time I called him – we used to talk to each other a lot, sometimes every day. [inaudible] and he answers from Geneva. Iman will witness that I would always tell him,

“Good morning, Mr. Minister,” he would respond, “Cherine [pasha].” He insisted on saying it. Iman reminded me of that the other day.

What touched me in that first moment is how he made me feel at ease, how he made me feel that I was talking to a great but humble person and a very friendly person. He opened his heart to me in the first minute. The conversation flew with such ease. Everyone around here probably felt the same way the first time they talked to Tarek. He was an amazing person who made others feel good. Even on that call, he made me feel good.

So, from that moment onwards, we became friends. So that was the first time. It was on the telephone before I met him. Then, afterwards, when I met him, he was even better than the telephone calls.

BAHER ESMAT:

Thank you, Cherine. Thank you, everyone, for sharing your thoughts. I’d like to turn it back over to Brad. Brad?

BRAD WHITE:

Thank you, Baher, and thanks to all of you for your remembrances. Now it’s your turn. If you’d like to tell us about any of your special memories of Tarek, please queue up along her to the microphone. Give us your name and please address the audience.

Our first speaker is Ambassador Hossam Muharram, the Egyptian Consul General in Montreal. Ambassador?

HOSSAM MUHARRAM:

I'm really honored to stand before you today to pay tribute to a great man who served his profession. He served his country with the excellence he deserves. Dr. Tarek had a tremendous job in putting Egypt on the great ... His efforts in Egypt resulted in enlightening the lives of millions of Egyptians by providing them and making/developing the information technology infrastructure in Egypt, allowed the flow of knowledge to millions of Egyptians, and allowed the flow of commerce as well to many entities, thus resulting in the economic development of the country. I think that the job that was done in Egypt was a pioneering job that was never seen before.

Dr. Tarek, on behalf of Egypt, I wish to thank you. I hope that your path will be illuminated by the lights that you have ignited in millions of Egyptians. Thank you, Dr. Tarek. May God bless you. Thank you.

GEORGE SADOWSKY:

I'm George Sadowsky. I used to be on the Board. I first Tarek as a bureaucrat, then as a colleague, and finally as a friend. I met him in San Francisco at [Interrupt] in 1992, where he was learning about the Internet and how to put Egypt on it. He was at the ISOC Workshop in 1993. He learned TCPIP networking, and his conversations with us who were on the staff were so intense and illuminating regarding the future of the Internet and how would we manage it and so on that we suggested that he and his colleague, [Nashua Abdelbucky] teach the network management course that we were going to put in the next year. And they did. They did it well and they did it for four of five years until they had other things to do.

I served on the ISOC Board with Tarek. He was intense. He was concerned about making sure that he understood things and that he contributed well to the discussion. It was a pleasure to be with him there.

In 2012, when he was through with his job with the government, he spent some time with us in Vermont. My wife and I tried to have conversations with him, but, every few minutes, there was a telephone call on his mobile and there was a stream of fluent Arabic that came out. Tarek was engaged in this conversation which was clearly very emotional, very intense, and I thought, “Well, this man is probably trying to decide and figure out what the future of Egypt should be and he’s doing it remotely.” So he was very concerned about the situation and he gave it his all.

We then had a relationship with ICANN when he joined ICANN. I remember – I think it was in 2013 when we started this – he always wanted to review the state of affairs before an ICANN meeting. When I came early to one ICANN meeting, he said, “Let’s go out and have a good steak dinner.” I said, “Okay. I don’t eat a lot of steak.” He looked at this in this intense way that said, “You’re eating steak tonight.” Ever since then, at every meeting, he’s said, “Come a little early. Let’s make sure we have time for dinner.” So we ate steak in Asia. We ate steak in Europe. We ate steak in Latin America. We ate steak in all continents of the world except Antarctica, I think.

He was a man who believed in understanding problems, understanding detail, and then doing the best he could to get some good out of it. He

was dispassionate. He was thoughtful. I never saw him angry. In fact, I was going to say I don't think he ever got angry, but I guess, Goran, you provoked it at one point. He set a wonderful example.

Only very late in our relationship did I understand from my African colleagues how much of a force he was in Africa, how he took leadership roles not only in Egypt but in the Arab world and in Africa. I think we've seen some testimonials to that tonight.

I'm going to miss him.

WOLFGANG KLEINWACHTER: My name is Wolfgang Kleinwachter. I was also a member of the Board. I met Tarek around 25 years ago at an [I-NET] ISOC meeting in Barcelona. This was a time when the world spelled Egypt with a small "e" thanks to Tarek because, in the '90s, Egypt was really on its way into the Information Society. The engine behind this was Tarek Kamel. Sometimes I joked and said, "Why not use the A in your first name, Tarek, as an @? Then it's easier to send you an e-mail."

We had a lot of things in common. He had studied in Germany, in Munich. So always, if we met, we spoke German. He loved to speak German. We had a lot of nice conversation. Only two weeks before he passed away, we had a one-hour telephone conversation and we exchanged a lot of views because he had also two other things in common. One was family. He had two kids. I have two sons. We both were struggling for many years for how to find the right balance between doing our job with all the engagement which was already

outlined here and our family because we both love our families. We had also a shared/common problem, and this was our health problems with cancer. We exchanged endless views. Unfortunately, he lost.

Rest in peace. Probably we can send him an e-mail with the @ in Tarek. Thank you.

MARKUS KUMMER:

I'm Markus Kummer, also a former ICANN Board member. I also happen to be the Chair of the IGF's Board Association, where I had the honor and the privilege to serve with Tarek as an Executive Committee member. He will leave a big void there and he's already sorely missed as an Executive Committee member of the IGF, as I said.

I knew him back during the WSIS time, but I got to know him better when he moved to Geneva, where we became closer and I learned to know him and appreciate him as a friend.

But let me talk about an early memory. I think it was in 2006 when he organized a ministerial conference in Cairo to prepare for the first IGF meeting. He invited me to the head table after I had given a speech there. I thought there would be all sorts of ministers at the table, but no. He had invited African Internet pioneers that you'll remember: Nii Quaynor and others. No ministers. And then I realized what a special man he was. He was not interested in protocol but he was interested in substance.

Tarek, we will miss you.

[TIJANI BEN JEMAA]:

Good evening. [inaudible]. These are the languages Tarek spoke, as such. Tarek used to finish his sentences with “as such.” Tarek didn’t come to this meeting because the illness took him away forever. We all will miss him. Tarek I knew from the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) from 2003-2005. He used to be an advisor to the Egyptian minister and represented his country while I was an activist of the Civil Society. So we didn’t meet a lot because they have their meetings and we have our meetings. But we met frequently when we discussed specific issues like diversity. Tarek was passionate about diversity and so was I.

Then he became a minister and continued to behave the same. He opened ICANN 33 in Cairo in 2008 as minister of the host country. When he was about to leave the room, he saw me and came to shake my hand. I am sure he didn’t remember my name at the time.

At IGF 2009 in Sharm El Sheikh, he was also the minister of the host country. One day I saw him leaving the hall with several of his colleagues or his assistants. He changes his path and came to me and my wife, shook our hands, and told my wife, “Welcome to Egypt, madam.” Here also I was sure he didn’t remember my name at that time. My wife asked me, “Who is this man?” I told her, “He’s the minister of the host country. He’s the one who organized all of this huge event.” She was surprised and impressed by his simplicity and his modesty.

At ICANN 44 in Prague in 2012, I came late in a session and I heard someone saying, “As Dr. Tarek Kamel said,” I asked my neighbor,

“Where is Dr. Tarek Kamel?” and she told me, “He’s just in front of you.” I couldn’t recognize him with the huge number of kilos he lost.

We chatted after the session and I invited him to our standing AFRALO/AfrICANN meeting. He came and participated actively, discussing the statement, proposing modifications, etc. He continued coming to our African space. When he got recruited by ICANN, we kept inviting him and he never declined. The same thing happened with the Middle East space recently created.

The whole of ICANN lost an [inaudible], dedicated, and hard-working senior staff member. The community lost a great supporter. Africa and the Middle East lost one of their best children. I lost a close and very dear friend. Rest in peace, my friend.

WENDY PROFIT:

My name is Wendy Profit. I’m from ICANN org and I met Tarek in Brazil, the tropical place where we had the IGF in 2014. I was there supporting our Board, as I do to this day. Tarek welcomed me very warmly, as everyone has said.

The next thing that happened was my colleague in Latin America, Daniel Fink, came up to me and said, “Tarek killed a lizard in his room and he needs to speak with us immediately.” I didn’t know why those things were connected. He said, “He’s very angry.” So Goran wasn’t the only one that made him angry. We came to him and we said, “What happened?” and he said, “I killed a lizard in my room and the Board can’t stay in this hotel.” The hotel was built in the ‘60s. It looked like

something from a James Bond movie. It was circular and it was next the water. I mean Sean Connery’s James Bond, not Daniel Craig. It was 1967.

So he had us move all the Board members from the old side of the hotel to the new side of the hotel, which was probably remodeled in 1980. He was very concerned that something like this would happen to one of our Board members, that they would be greeted by bugs or lizards in their room.

Further to that, we waited up all night as each Board member arrived at 4:00 and 5:00 and 2:00 and midnight and on and greeted them, letting them know that we’d moved them to the new side of the hotel but, if they didn’t like their room, we would move them to another hotel that was more modern and new. Every Board member declined and stayed in the room that we were offered.

I just wanted to tell that story because it’s just another of the thousands of examples of how much he cared and wanted to make sure that the people he cared about were taken care of. I’ll miss him, too.

NIGEL HICKSON:

I’m Nigel Hickson. I worked for Tarek Kamel, both in the Brussels office and in the Geneva office. I first met Tarek perhaps in the middle 2000s. I was an official with the U.K. government. He was the Minister for Communications in Egypt. He was a figure that was incredibly respected. He came to the U.K. a couple of times to meet U.K. ministers, and I had the privilege to meet him then.

But the occasion I remember in the U.K. was when he came once and I was called down to greet him in reception and bring him up to the minister. That was my job. He wasn't alone. He had a television crew with him. This was a particularly sensitive building. It was a sensitive time in the U.K. and I said, "Minister, we can't have a television crew in the building. You can't just bring a television crew with you." He said, "But they're Egyptian. They're my television. They need to be here." So we had to have a compromise where the minister came down and was photographed in the street with him. But the television crew never came in. And he remembered that when I met him again later on when I had the privilege to work with him when he first came to the Brussels office in 2012. We worked on government engagement in the European area.

In 2014, when he set up the office in Geneva, I had the privilege of moving to Geneva and working in the office with him there. We worked there continuously from that time.

Tarek as incredible, as you've heard. He had this ability to operate on so many levels. The story that was told earlier by others about him being a minister ... When I first met him again in ICANN, I used the expression "minister" as well, and he quickly disabused me of that. He was a humble man. In the Geneva office, we operated as a team. He made the tea. He wasn't very good at making coffee. We used to do everything together. He was a mentor. He was a friend. He was a colleague.

You've heard the story about the Post-It notes from Mandy. His writing was not very clear. All right, his writing was awful. He wrote corrections that we were writing for Goran and other people on Post-It notes and put the Post-It notes on the draft. You had to [die-so] for the notes. It was never easy. It was a task that many of us had to do in the Geneva office. But it was something we always remember him for.

And those Post-It notes are still there in his office. When we walk through his office in Geneva, we remember him. We remember all that he gave to the community. We remember his inspiration, his passion, his loyalty, his friendship. We certainly will miss him in Geneva.

[NAMMA ENING]:

My name is [Namma Ening]. I'm the Israeli representative to the GAC and I live in a neighboring country to Egypt. I heard the word "ICANN" in 2000 for the first time. In 2000 there was ICANN meeting in Cairo. I met Tarek first in WSIS 2005 in Tunisia. We had a bilateral meeting between the ministers. It was an unforgettable meeting. I was amazed by his professionalism, his [inaudible]. That was a very good bilateral meeting.

I met him again a few times in Geneva. I had a call with him. "I'm here to say that I need some assistance." I had a call with him about a year ago in Geneva. I met him a few times in Geneva but it was for something specific. I asked for his advice and he didn't give me advice. He operated. He did something and he bridged boundaries.

I want to thank you, Tarek, for this. I want to thank you again. Shalom, Chaverim. In Hebrew, it's "Goodbye, friend." I would like to convey my deep condolences to Ms. Kamel and Omar and the Board of ICANN and to the ICANN family. Thank you.

BARRACK OTIENO:

Good evening, dear colleagues. My name is Barrack Otieno. I'm the manager for Africa's top-level domains organization, the regional ccTLD organization for Africa. I'll say a few things about Tarek, whom I first interacted with in 2012. I knew him as a cool, calm, and collected person. I interacted with Tarek during the creation of the Africa strategy, where I found the other Internet pioneers in Africa: Pierre Dandijinou, Nii Quaynor. There was Adiel, who was hosting the meeting as CEO of AFRINIC, and [Rochelle], I believe.

My memory in that meeting is that one day he found me at the reception after the meeting. Being the youngest, I had nothing in common with the elders that were sitting in that meeting then. I remember him asking me to go down for a walk with him. He made me really settle into the community. I think this was just about two years after I had joined the organization. I didn't know that he was a minister or had been a minister, but the memory I have of him is him just encouraging me and telling me that I was on the right path. So, indeed, as many have said, he was a great leader.

The other thing is that, out of that meeting, we've seen a lot of development in the ccTLD community on the African continent. He gave

a lot of input alongside the other Internet pioneers from the continent, whom we were sitting together with, working on the strategy.

The other memory I have is that I really got into the Internet space through the Internet Governance Forum that was hosted in 2009 in Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt. Since then, a lot of developments have taken place in the African continent insofar as Internet governance is concerned. I believe, as long as we speak about Internet governance on the continent, we'll always remember the contribution of Tarek Kamel. So my condolences to the family, to the ICANN community, and to the leadership of ICANN.

One more thing is that, from the time I interacted with Tarek in 2012, he never forget my name. Every time we passed each other in the ICANN corridors, he would always wave and say, "Hi, Barrack," of course with the trademark smile that everyone has talked about.

So may he rest in peace. We are really going to miss him. My condolences to the family and again to the ICANN community. Thank you very much.

STEVE DELBIANCO:

Steve DelBianco. My fondest memory of Tarek was in the autumn of 2015. We were in the United Nations compound in Joao Pessoa, Brazil, for the Internet Governance Forum, and it was time for us to have a conversation with the governments about the stress we had caused – or I'd caused – with Stress Test 18. Tarek pulled me into private room, put his hand on my shoulder in that way that conveyed, "Shut up and

listen” – and I did – and, in the kindest way, he laid out a proposed compromise and coached me on a more productive approach in dealing with the governments. He said, “This is their house and these are my people.” He knew what the way was.

So I miss him dearly and I ask Tarek to keep sending wisdom my way because we all need it.

MARYLIN CADE:

My name is Marilyn Cade. I’m going to talk about a different aspect of Tarek than has been spoken about so far. I met Tarek through a unique circumstance before he joined the government because I worked for AT&T and I supported AT&T Labs. Somehow the senior engineers and researchers and the president of AT&T Labs new of Tarek and invited him to a meeting in the United States. I got to meet Tarek at that time.

I didn’t really think about a lot about it until I saw the announcement about being appointed minister. A few years later, along with WITSA, the World IT Services Alliance, I traveled with a group of about ten male executives from the high-tech sector – Oracle, IBM, the company I worked for (AT&T), and others. Tarek hosted us for a bilateral high-tech dialogue in Cairo.

About a month later, I was at international meeting where there were a number of ministers – five or six – from the [meeting] region. There was again the executive director (male) of the high-tech associations. There was the male executive from IBM, from Oracle, etc., and there was me. The odds were about even, right? Tarek announced to the ministers

that they would have an opportunity to hear from the international expert on e-commerce. I turned around and look at all the men, and Tarek turned around and said, “Madam Cade.” I turned around and said, “Shit.”

Tarek gave us not only himself but he gave us his team. For those of you who do not know, his team was always heavily female and always engaged and representing the spirit that Tarek embodied and the commitment that Tarek embodied.

All of you may know or suspect that, of course, when ICANN went to Egypt, it was Tarek. But what you may not know is that, when we, the much broader community, went to an Internet Governance Forum, to Egypt, it was Tarek.

He will always live with us. I know you will always, always remember him and treasure the contribution that he made.

[JAM BURNESE]:

Thank you. I’m [Jam Burnese] from AFRINIC. I’ve crossed [inaudible] of Mr. Kamel several times since WSIS and until ICANN. I just want to say that I had the opportunity to have a more in-depth discussion with him since a few years. He was so full of ideas that even having spent 25 or 30 years in this community talking, Tarek Kamel was just feeling like a young man, a young boy that has a lot of things to discover. That was a very, very nice feeling.

Tarek was a master of time. He had the recipe to dedicate and intensity in the relations and, at the same time, he was doing his job. That was

very impressive. Maybe his secret that he was communicating his patience to the team. For those who were working with him directly, I know that that was very intense and an everyday challenge, never routine.

I will just end with saying that AFNIC has been honored to welcome Tarek several times. He was in Geneva coming to Paris, never forgetting to say hello to us, to welcome our community to come to our dinner. He has been the only one to pay attention to an organization like us, never forgetting to tell us as much as he thought we were important and cc's were important. So for that also I would like to thank him, and of course seize the opportunity to convey not only my condolences but the condolences of all the stakeholders of AFNIC and all the French Internet community that knew him and respected him a lot. Thank you.

BRAD WHITE:

Let me make on quick announcement. These folks will be the last folks that will be making comments. We are going to have, at the end of the evening, a book of remembrances, which we would like all of you to sign and make a note in. But we also have a presentation that we want to make to the family. So these five folks will be our last speakers. Please, sir?

ABDULLAH AMER:

Thank you. My name is Abdullah Amer, the ccNSO Council member representing the Africa region. I'll make it short because of time.

I've known Tarek for the last six years when I joined the cc community. I'll just speak of one of the projects which he really assisted us to implement in Africa. Of course, there's a lot of things he has done for us.

He had this unique connectiveness with people because I remember, when I was elected in the leadership of the ccNSO Council, he actually sent a congratulatory message and said, "Now that you have joined the African leadership, you need to do something about the number of domains." We used to push him and Pierre Dandjinou because of the African Engagement Office and actually delivered with the team at ICANN. I think, when we looked at the pictures that were shown, the Nairobi Engagement Office was one of the offices which was being opened and I think is the first ICANN office in Africa. I think that was a good effort.

I'll finish with a prayer by saying, "We all go for God and we all are going one day."

UNIDENTIFIED MALE:

The biggest tribute that we could pay to Tarek is to talk about the significance and value of the work that he did for ICANN. He brought governments closer to ICANN and acted as a bridge between the multi-stakeholder and multi-lateral process and has brought the Division of Governance Engagement to a good shape.

I didn't know Tarek on a personal level, but I've had occasions where I would find that he was a very approachable person. After a workshop in the Asia-Pacific Internet Governance Forum, I wrote a message to

Fadi, and Tarek joined the conversation [inaudible]. His response was longer than the message that I wrote to him. He was very receptive. The message that he sent reflected that he was deeply rooted in cultural values and he was a highly educated person on a deeper level.

May his soul rest in peace. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

It is with great sadness that I stand today to pay tribute to Dr. Tarek Kamel while he's not with us today. Dr. Tarek Kamel was a fighter for what he believed in. I first knew him as a very young engineer working at the Foreign Relations Coordination Unit at the Egyptian University's network three years before the Internet was commercialized in 1996. Dr. Tarek Kamel formed and shaped the Internet in Egypt. He founded the Internet Society of Egypt. He founded AFRINIC. He worked on advancing the Internet not only in Egypt the region and Africa but throughout the world.

May his soul rest his peace and may he always be remember for his good deeds. Dr. Tarek Kamal, you will always be missed. It's a great loss to all of us, to the whole Internet community. My deepest condolences go to the Internet community and to his wife, Iman, and his daughter, Heba, and his son, Omar.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:

I'm not sure I'll be able to make this, but I really owe it to Dr. Tarek. I've been working with Dr. Tarek for something like 25 years, since my graduation. We were on the same team – myself, Baher, [K]ristine (I

hope she's listening in) and even my husband. We were all on the same team with Dr. Tarek. I worked with him on the Cabinet Information and Decisions Support Center when he was a senior advisor to the minister when he was a minister himself. Even when he left Cairo and left the government, we continued to coordinate between the GAC and the government engagement.

Back in the '90s, as Baher said, he not only brought the Internet to Egypt but even to neighboring countries. Baher would remember we used to travel with dial-in modems for neighboring countries to dial in to the Internet through Egypt. He used to work until very late hours, as Mandy would know, of course.

Something that maybe Dr. Tarek himself doesn't know is that some people used to leave stuff as if they will be back and they'd go home because the department we used to work in had a very long corridor at one end, where was the whole Internet hub for Egypt. The other end was Dr. Tarek's office. In between was the whole department. So he was really watching us 24/7.

Even when he was at the hospital, he continued to join all conference calls and he even, when the nurse came, told her not to interrupt and to come back later because he was on the call.

So I've never met someone so dedicated, a workaholic but human at the same time. He was strategic but never missed any of the details. He used to review his speeches once and twice and three times and, at the same time, review also the menus that will be served for dinner at the

conferences. So he was a perfectionist, and I believe he's the godfather of the ITC community in Egypt.

I will miss him so much. We already miss him so much. I hope he's in a better place. Thank you.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN:

Good evening. My Maarten Botterman and my first memories are just memories of a welcome, a welcome by this warm man. We shared some passions about capacity building, about Internet governance at a global level. It took me some time to appreciate how incredibly sharp he was and how incredibly much he cared about Internet governance, about the world, about people.

Over the years, we talked a lot and I learned a lot from him. I also learned to appreciate Iman together with my wife as a couple that is not only out there, not only working, but also so human, so warm. Such a warm [inaudible] to be in the presence of.

I just want to share that his last words to me were, "Maarten, eager to see you at the end of September. Eager to see you and continue our strategic IG talk for the ICANN ecosystem." Well, I had that talk with him but it didn't happen anymore in this life. It went so fast. I miss him. I really appreciate the enormous respect that I see displayed. It's a mirror of his respect for people.

[inaudible], one of the things I saw recently after he passed away a week ago was just this little video clip of the World Radio Conference in Sharm El Sheikh, where people were standing, just being still. He's

worth it. He's worth remembering and we'll take him with us. Thank you for being with us, Iman and Omar, to celebrate his life.

BRAD WHITE:

Sometimes it's not the words. It's the emotion behind the words. Let's thank all these folks.

Now I'm going to invite to the stage ICANN President and CEO, Goran Marby, to the podium, where he will welcome Iman and Omar to the stage. Goran?

GORAN MARBY:

Iman and Omar, there is no doubt that anyone who knew Tarek knows that you were the most important people in his life. So we decided, because we don't always want to be sad, to celebrate together with you his memory. As you know, we asked the community and we asked everybody to write memories of him. We also did the same internally. We did this book. This book I hope you can look at because it's actually a lot of fun stories about the Tarek we know.

IMAN KAMEL:

Thank you very much. Thank you, Goran. Thank you.

OMAR KAMEL:

I'd also like to say a few words. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for being here tonight to pay tribute to my beloved father, Tarek Kamel. A big thank you to the ICANN Board Chair, Cherine Chalaby, and ICANN

CEO, Goran, for their warm welcome and for all their support, which made it possible for us to be here. We also thank the Consul General of our beloved Egypt, Hossam Muharram, for his attendance.

Tarek’s involvement with the Internet community, as you can see, goes back to the early ‘90s. He also got involved with ICANN since its earlier days and attended ICANN meetings in 1990. He even hosted two ICANN meetings in Cairo, ICANN 05 (we’re at ICANN 66 right now) in March of 2000 and ICANN 33 in November 2008.

In the last seven years, he was devoted to his work at ICANN. We as a family believe that his passion for his work with you was one of the main reasons he got to win many battle against his illness. He was strengthened by the love, support, and appreciation of ICANN and the Internet community.

Thank you for being part of his life. Again, thank you for all your heartfelt condolences, for your attendance, and for the comfort you provided to us in this difficult time. Allow me to quote Abraham Lincoln. “In the end, it’s not the years in your life that count. Is it the life in your years that counts.” From us as a family, let the good memories prevail. Thank you very much.

BRAD WHITE:

Thanks to everyone for showing up this evening. We appreciate it. Please join us in the back of the room to share some apple juice, one of Tarek’s favorite beverages. Again, if you would like to sign a memorial

book, there will be one in the back of the room. Thank you, all, again for coming.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]