



The African Internet Governance Forum (Af IGF)

<http://afigf.uneca.org/>

Terms of Reference

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Background on Internet Governance

Building on the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals, and the mandate given at the Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis (WSIS), the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a United Nations led-activity initiated in 2006 as a global platform for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue on prevailing and emerging issues on Internet governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability, and development of the Internet.

IGF mandate as per Paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda

72. We ask the UN Secretary-General, in an open and inclusive process, to convene, by the second quarter of 2006, a meeting of the new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue—called the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). The mandate of the Forum is to:

- Discuss public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet;
- Facilitate discourse between bodies dealing with different cross-cutting international public policies regarding the Internet and discuss issues that do not fall within the scope of any existing body;
- Interface with appropriate inter-governmental organizations and other institutions on matters under their purview;
- Facilitate the exchange of information and best practices, and in this regard make full use of the expertise of the academic, scientific and technical communities;
- Advise all stakeholders in proposing ways and means to accelerate the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world;
- Strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet governance mechanisms, particularly those from developing countries;
- Identify emerging issues, bring them to the attention of the relevant bodies and the general public, and, where appropriate, make recommendations;

- Contribute to capacity building for Internet governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise;
- Promote and assess, on an ongoing basis, the embodiment of WSIS principles in Internet governance processes;
- Discuss, inter alia, issues relating to critical Internet resources;
- Help to find solutions to the issues arising from the use and misuse of the Internet, of particular concern to everyday users;
- Publish its proceedings.

The mandate of Internet Governance Forum was put in place initially for a five years duration; 2006 in Greece, 2007 in Brazil, 2008 in India, 2009 in Egypt, 2010 in Lithuania. Following the first five years successful mandate of IGF the international community requested for extension to another five years, which started in Kenya in 2011.

Towards the African Internet Governance Forum

The Internet Governance space in Africa has been very active during the WSIS process with regional meetings held from 2002 to 2005 in Bamako, Accra, Addis Ababa, Cairo, Johannesburg, Douala and Tunis. Moreover, within the IGF global initiative, Africa has hosted IGF in Egypt (2009) and in Kenya (2011).

Presently, there are five sub-regional initiatives that are ongoing in Africa; which include the West Africa Internet Governance Forum (WAIGF), the East Africa Internet Governance Forum (EAIGF), Forum de Gouvernance de l'Internet en Afrique Centrale (FGI-CA), the Southern Africa Internet Governance Forum (SAIGF) and the North African Internet Governance Forum (NAIGF). These sub-regional initiatives, though active in their operation, do not yet cover all the countries in their respective regions. Moreover some of the countries are not actively participating in the initiatives

There is therefore a strong need for the establishment of an African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF) that will support and promote the consolidation of the on-going sub-regional initiatives. It shall also reach out to continental and global stakeholders and guide in their engagement in continental, sub-regional and national initiatives.

Main objectives of AfIGF:

AfIGF aims to be a platform for an inclusive multilateral, multi-stakeholder and multilingual discussion on issues pertinent to the Internet in Africa in general and Internet Governance issues in particular.

Specific objectives include:

- To increase awareness and build capacity on Internet Governance for African users to ensure that all stakeholders are well prepared for contribution and interaction.
- To ensure that the concerns of Africa are taken into account in the IGF process.
- To put in place a coordinated African process for dealing with Internet governance issues on the continent.

- To strengthen the multi-stakeholder dialogue model for Internet Governance in Africa through regional and national forums.
- To ensure a multi-stakeholder representation of all parts of the continent
- To ensure that all the countries are part of the various processes and launch/strengthen their national processes.
- To facilitate national and regional exchanges and interactions between countries and sub-regions in continent.
- To facilitate the participation of African stakeholders in AfIGF and other appropriate Internet Governance Forums.
- To promote use of African languages in the cyberspace.

Fundamental principles

The AfIGF shall, in keeping with the original Internet Governance Forum:

- **Be Open** - all entities, organisations and participating institutions which are Internet governance stakeholders shall be free to join the forum.
- **Multi-stakeholder** - At all points, efforts shall be made to encourage all categories of stakeholders to actively participate in the Forum.
- **Language Diversity** - The AfIGF, to the measure of its capacity, shall strive to maintain language diversity in its operations.
- **Remote participation** - The AfIGF shall make optimum use of the Internet to increase number of participants.
- **Transparency** - The stakeholders shall strive to be open in communications, in decisions and their implementations. Clear understanding of the Internet Governance process for sustainability in engagement of all stakeholders shall be the aim of the AfIGF.

Membership

Membership to AfIGF is open to all stakeholder groups of all the African sub-regions. Members shall be conveners from the Sub-Regional IGFs of the five African sub-regions, individuals from Relevant African Government Institutions, African Civil Society, academic and technical communities, African Private Sector, and African based Regional and international organizations. Like the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) of the global IGF, members serve in their personal capacity, but are expected to have extensive linkages with their respective stakeholder groups. The activities of AfIGF shall be coordinated by a Bureau.

The AfIGF Bureau

The AfIGF Bureau shall be composed of the conveners of the five African sub-regional IGFs and three other stakeholder representatives from each sub-region. The Bureau shall be led by a Chairperson, representing the country which hosts the AfIGF Forum. At each annual AfIGF meeting, the Chairperson shall, in consultation with Bureau members designate one General Rapporteur among themselves to assist the Chairperson in drafting a summary of the meeting.

The Bureau shall develop annual work plan of the AfIGF activities. In appropriate cases, the AfIGF may be held in the framework of one of the sub-regional IGFs.

Modus operandi

AfIGF shall meet every year at different venue in each sub-region.

Work at meetings of the Forum shall be organized in plenary meetings and in breakout sessions depending on topics identified for the particular year's Forum. A Chairperson's or Moderator's summary shall be produced for each workshop, breakout and plenary session in each year's session of the Forum.

AfIGF shall also meet every year at the IGF venue and whenever possible during MAG consultations, which are held between two Internet Governance Forums.

AfIGF shall promote use of discussion lists and other online tools to facilitate discussions and exchange of information among its members.

Role of the AfIGF secretariat

The AfIGF Secretariat shall be composed of a lean secretariat and seasonal volunteers including interns and fellows from the continent.

The secretariat will have the following responsibilities:

- Provide administrative, logistical and organisational support to the AfIGF
- Promote the AfIGF activities of the members (sub-regional and national IGFs including other stakeholders);
- Develop strategies on sustaining the AfIGF process and secretariat in consultation with Bureau members;
- Act as a knowledge management hub of the AfIGF experiences, best practices, knowledge, expertise, needs and resources among sub-regional and national IGFs;
- Convene AfIGF meetings; and
- Develop and maintain active e-mail lists and website to provide updated AfIGF related information to sub-regional and national IGFs including other international stakeholders.

Hosting of the AfIGF secretariat

Based on the model of the global Internet Governance Forum (IGF) secretariat, which is hosted by the United Nations Department of Economic Affairs (UNDESA), the African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF) secretariat will be hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

The African Union Commission will fully support the secretariat in its activities to fulfill its mandate.