

INTERNET GOVERNANCE PARTNERSHIP

AFRINIC NATIONAL REGULATORY AUTHORITIES GOVERNMENTS POLICY MAKERS

(Promoting the Multi-stakeholder Model for further Internet Development in Africa)

Concept Paper for WAIGF



Background

AfriNIC, the Regional Internet Registry (RIR) for Africa, has a mission to support Internet technology usage and development and to promote Internet self governance. This all pervasive task cannot be done in isolation, rather, it requires the involvement of stakeholders at various levels, but more importantly, that of governments, policy makers and regulators.

Today, National Regulatory Authorities (NRA), governments and policy makers are increasingly realizing that their role is germane to continuous development of the Internet. A role that includes:

- Identifying obstacles that impede the growth of the Internet;
- Identifying ways to accomplish related tasks more effectively and efficiently;
- Staying informed of the industry trends;
- Understanding of the resources required and their availability; and,
- Developing relationships with other organizations that are also tasked with common goals.

Moreover, they are realizing the impact that Internet Protocol resources have on the growth and expansion of the telecommunications industry, namely with the deployment of mobile technologies which has accelerated the use of IP resources and the emerging of new applications on the Internet that use the Internet Protocol as their backbone.

Consequently, in light of the convergence of the mandates of NRAs, other government organizations and AfriNIC, it is desirable that there is increased communication and partnerships with each other in efforts which are of common interest and to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the limited resources available to achieve the common goal of ensuring Internet access to most across the continent. In realizing this, AfriNIC and ARTP (l'Agence de Régulation des Télécommunications et des Postes), for example, successfully organized an Internet Governance Workshop in October 2008, which was held in Dakar, Senegal. The success of this workshop was measured by the number of participants from government, civil society and the private sector locally, the positive feedback from all, and the subsequent requests from other regulators to hold similar events in their respective regions or countries.

It is important to note that participation and sponsorship was also received from ICANN, ISOC, and Kheweul, key players in the African region with leadership roles in Internet development. This workshop was organized using the multi-stakeholder approach, an approach that we wish to continue to emphasize and apply going forward. It is in this context that AfriNIC is advocating increased communications and partnering with the NRAs, governments, and policy makers and is therefore committed to this initiative and to hold subsequent workshops (two to three times per year) across Africa, which is the concept that is addressed hereunder.

Purpose

AfriNIC is planning a 2nd regional Internet Governance Workshop for NRAs, governments, and policy makers, called the West Africa Internet Governance Forum (WAIGF).

Objective of the Internet Governance Workshop

The objective is to hold a workshop similar to the IG Workshop held in Dakar, Senegal, Oct '08 as well as the EAIGF held annually in Nairobi, Kenya, with more focus on establishing an on-going relationship and partnership between AfriNIC and the NRAs, governments, policy makers, as well as with other local, regional, and international organizations that are also tasked with Internet development mandates. It is important that processes are developed to ensure that the African issues are so well ventilated that they become internationally pertinent for action within such organizations as the African Union, African Telecommunication Union, CRASA, ARICEA and WATRA among others.

Other objectives include:

1. To identify African resources in different areas of the Internet and organize them into specialized clusters or existing clusters in the region
2. To utilize the new platform for regular and meaningful dialogue focused on improvement in the development of the Internet throughout Africa.
3. To develop the appropriate framework for on-going communication for transfer of knowledge and information and the sharing of resources.

4. To liaise with regional organizations dealing inter alia with Internet matters for better coordination.
5. To identify methods to increase awareness of the actions of such international organizations within the African Internet community, such as ICANN, IANA, ISOC, RIRs, ATU, and ITU in the field of Internet development and to avoid duplication of these efforts.
6. To establish a think tank on such issues as Internet security and cyber criminality, building on most regional cyber initiatives that took place for the past 5 years, to pave the way for an African legal instrument to regulate cross border issues and help in enforcement.
7. To assist AfriNIC in the adoption and monitoring of the efficient use of Internet Number Resources.
8. To promote the bottom-up policy development processes established in the Internet Industry.
9. To increase awareness and participation in the global IGF.

Tentative topics for the workshop(s)

1. Access
2. Capacity Building in Internet development
3. Development of local content
4. Cybercrimes & Cyber security
5. The transition from IPv4 to IPv6
6. The role of government in Internet Development
7. Framework for partnerships
8. Creation of African Clusters for reflection and dialogue on the IGF
9. Government and Regulators Roundtable

Benefits/Anticipated Outcomes

We believe that the concepts of Internet Governance as established by the UN World Summit through the WSIS process are sound and global concepts, and are therefore being used as a reference for the creation of the WAIGF. However, it is important to note that continuation of the WAIGF is not dependent on the future of IGF.

It is hoped that the following benefits and outcomes are achieved after this event:

- That relationships are established, promoted and strengthened;
- That a more global platform will be established to consolidate key issues and concerns affecting development of the Internet throughout Africa;

- That continuity can be achieved from similar local and regional efforts being made, such as the EAIGF in Nairobi, Kenya, the West Africa IG Workshop held in March 2009, and the IG Workshop held in Dakar, Senegal, Oct 2008; and,
- That other local IGF initiatives will be established in areas where they do not currently exist or are in the process of being formed to ultimately result in a global African IGF.

At the closure of the meeting, a report will be published wherein the substance of each session will be summarized as well as decisions taken and become part of the framework for the way forward.

We would like to also include organizations that have similar interests and initiatives, such as ECOWAS, PIWA, NITDA, ACSIS, ARTP, and EAIGF.

Location: Accra, Ghana

Date: October 14 -16, 2009

Target Audience: NRA, Governments, Policy Makers

Financing: Although AfriNIC will be a key sponsor, we would like to also give sponsorship opportunities to other organizations.

Theme: Promoting the Multi-stakeholder Model for further Internet Development in Africa

If you are interested in participating in this initiative by presenting at the workshop, providing input, sponsorship, hosting the event, attending an event, or becoming a partner, please contact:

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AfriNIC, the Regional Internet Registry for Africa, is a non-government, not-for-profit, membership based organization, headquartered in Mauritius, and is responsible for the management and distribution of Internet Number Resources throughout the African continent.

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