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7TH WEST AFRICA INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

**18 TO 19 JUNE 2015
ABUJA, NIGERIA**

THEME: INTERNET – A FREEDOM FOR ALL

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

The ECOWAS Commission hosted the 7th edition of the West Africa Internet Governance Forum (WAIGF) from 18 to June in Abuja, Nigeria. The WAIGF is an open and global platform for multi-stakeholder discussion in which public authorities, private companies and the civil societies of the West African sub-region meet to forge a common vision around issues that affect all stakeholders on the issue of Internet governance. The sessions and discussions of this year were around the main theme: “**Internet: A Freedom for All**”.

1.2 Methodology of Work

The forum was organised into three (3) main parts as follows:

1.2.1 Part I: Opening Ceremony

This was the introduction phase of the forum and was marked with various opening remarks and goodwill messages.

1.2.2 Part II: Expert Panels

The forum was organised into eight (8) sessions with panel speakers under the three sub themes of the forum, each session was conducted in two parts:

- I. Presentation: Each speaker gave a presentation in relation to the theme of the session.
- II. Questions/Answers: At the end of each session, the forum floor was opened to questions/answers from participants which make up the recommendations for the WAIGF final communique.

1.2.3 Part III: Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony was marked by the adoption of the final communiqué of the forum and closing of the discussions held over the last two (2) days of discussions.

1.2.3.1 Participants

The forum was attended by eighty (80) participants from the public and private sector as well as civil society (Internet Community) representing ten (10) ECOWAS member countries, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo.

2 OPENING CEREMONY

The opening Ceremony of the 7th West Africa Internet Governance Forum was held on Thursday, June 18 2015 in Abuja, Nigeria under the chairmanship of the Director General, National Information Technology Development Agency with the theme "Internet: A Freedom for All".

The first opening remark was by Isaias Barreto da Rosa, ECOWAS Commissioner for Telecommunications and Information Technologies. He welcomed and thanked all national delegations that graced the event. He stated that all citizens have an equal right to access the Internet. He highlighted the challenges faced within the region which have impeded the use of the Internet from fully contributing to the economy of the ECOWAS Member States. He noted that indeed our citizens have a right to access the Internet as after all, according to the United Nations the Internet access is a basic human right. He concluded by stating that the ECOWAS Commission is working to develop regional Telecommunication infrastructure and regional regulations that will help create an enabling environment which we need to ensure the Internet within our region is truly accessible for all.

Yaovi Atohoun the ICANN Stakeholder Engagement and Operations Manager Africa he expressed his delight that the forum was happening at a crucial time for ICANN. He emphasised the need for a more open and participative approach, encourage country participation across the region. However, he stressed that we would know not be here today to speak about the Internet if it is was not available for everyone, and more needs to be done to encourage content enriched by African productions made by Africans. He reiterated ICANN's support for all IGF initiatives in Africa and called for the development of the DNS industry in Africa. He rounded up indicating that his organisation will continue to support the participation of African sessions on Internet governance and DNS all of which contribute to the improvement of the internet in the region.

Sunday Folayan the representative from AFRINIC praised the efforts of the ECOWAS Committee to keep its place in the debate on the Internet. He also recalled the forum that AFRINIC is responsible for the management of IP resources and is concerned about the impending transition from IPv4 to IPv6 whilst ensuring that all IP resources are accessed.

Michuki Mwangi the representative from ISOC reiterated the support that his organisation brings to the internet and their commitment to the multisectoral approach for the development of an Internet for all, built in Africa by Africans.

On behalf of the delegates at the forum, Hama Beidi, the High Commissioner for the Digital Economy of Niger thanked the ECOWAS Commission for inviting Member States to this forum and reiterated the need for the involvement of all Members States in the national governance processes of the Internet. He did not fail to notice the absence of the Gambia which was to house the WAIGF 2014 cancelled due to the outbreak of the Ebola virus.

Judy Okite the West Africa Internet Governance Forum Coordinator, recalled the history of the organisation of fora on Internet governance since its first edition and the knowledge that this forum has achieved today. She was pleased that this success was possible with the contribution of all actors including national resources persons. She stated that most importantly she has noted an increasingly strong commitment from governments at the country levels. She indicated that the forum held under the theme of "Internet: A Freedom for All" allows us to understand how to run our infrastructure and put in place policies to boost growth. She noted that with the internet, people living with disabilities can participate in equal share to the development of our spaces and the economic impact of the internet is obvious, which is why we have a responsibility to meet with all actors. Finally, she spoke about the US President Abraham Lincoln and his spirit of freedom by inviting all Africans to say together, Internet: A Freedom for All.

The final address of the opening ceremony was by Peter Jack, Director General National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA). He recalled that Nigeria encourages the open and participatory manner of the multi-stakeholder approach. He stated that the government of Nigeria is working with key stakeholders to ensure that affordable Internet reaches all communities as although anyone can access the Internet on their phone some services for citizens cannot be sufficiently carried out on a phone. He reiterated the importance of ensuring involvement of all stakeholders to meet the needs of youth, people living with disabilities etc. He highlighted business opportunities in the field of DNS, IP and mobile. He concluded by commending all parties involved who worked so diligently to ensure the success of the forum and thanked all the delegations who graced the event before he officially declared the forum open.

3 FORUM SESSIONS

Various relevant topics were presented and discussed by the panel of experts under the main sub themes of the forum.

- I. Sub theme: Internet and Human Rights
 - Session 1: African declaration on internet rights and freedoms
 - Session 2: Internet and child online protection (Issues, challenges & Prospects)
 - Session 3: Internet intermediaries and violence against women (Issues, challenges & Prospects)
- II. Sub theme: Universal Access
 - Session 4: Infrastructure sharing
 - Session 5: Policies and Regulatory Environment framework in West Africa
- III. Sub theme: Internet for Economic Development
 - Session 6: The business impact in West Africa

- Session 7: The social impact in West Africa
- Session 8: Community issues of WAIGF

3.1 Sub theme: Internet and Human Rights

Session 1: African declaration on internet rights and freedoms

Moderator: Inoussa Traore, Resource Person WAIGF in Burkina Faso

Nnenna Nwakanma - World Wide Web Foundation

Reviewed the summary contained in the African declaration with particular reference with the digital revolution as life is now online. The declaration is not a completely finished and it is for stakeholders to make possible improvement. The declaration includes three (3) main parts- (the basic principles, action bases and incentives for action). The statement is based on an approach on the responsibilities of stakeholder-oriented approach rather than the mechanisms of repression. The declaration is an African action that is intended to be a model for the whole world.

Gbenqa Sesan - Civil society Nigeria - (A focus on how the African declaration can inspire national efforts)

Presented a case study on the situation of freedom of expression in Nigeria. Following facts of mass monitoring of online communications, actors of civil society have produced a bill on the internet they expect to present to MPs to legislate on the issue of online monitoring in order to avoid the excesses of the application of administrative directives adopted for denying citizens the rights conferred by the constitution. Called on civil societies in other countries to take action.

Abdulai Kamara - Contact person WAIGF Liberia - (Presentation on some specific principles of the declaration, their importance, their application in Liberia and the current trends in the African context, what organisations can do)

Addressed the issue of freedom of expression on the internet in Liberia. He indicated the need for African content produced by online African. He said it took seven years to have a law on access to information in Liberia. But since then, each public body has an obligation to make available information on its website for the benefit of the population. The challenges to the effective implementation of all the provisions of this law which was the first in the sub-region remains a challenge and the support of civil society is still required. Need to develop preventive measures and increase transparency and accountability. Liberia is the first country in West Africa to adopt the law on access to information and freedom but the challenge remains the effective implementation of the laws.

Amessinou Kossi - Contact person WAIGF Benin - (The African declaration on the rights and freedoms on the Internet and the Beninese positive law)

He presented a fresh perspective between the demands raised in the African bill of rights and freedoms of the internet in the Beninese positive law. It retains the three texts of laws relating to code information and communication, electronic communication and post and the protection of personal data in the Republic of Benin. These different laws guarantee citizens' rights, including freedom of expression with the decriminalization of press offenses in Benin and can be observed as obvious developments have taken into account the requirements contained in the African declaration.

Session 2: Internet and child online protection (Issues, challenges & Prospects)

Moderator: Michuki Mwangi

Issouf Diallo – Burkina Faso

He spoke to the participants focusing on the development of good practice. He highlighted the progressive evolution of the facilities of media over time has led to more interactions and digital tools within the reach of children. He stated that children are generally playful but also have access to non-fun activities online, he cited examples of observations that have had consequences on the lives of children some which have led to cases of suicide. He also referred to the steps taken in Burkina Faso as well by public actors and civil society to protect children online. Unfortunately the legal framework is not up to date to account for the observed facts but that the code of criminal procedure is under review. He emphasised that parental action must not be forgotten as they are the middle man who can ensure child protection and empowerment.

Segun Olugbile – Nigeria

He outlined the progress made by Nigeria in the protection of children online and insisted on training children on the use of the internet. He stated that the protection of children must involve multi-player action. He indicated that there was a national policy in this area that has the responsibilities of the parties. He rounded up by stating that there should be no difference between the protection of children online and their protection offline.

Thiam Ndeye Fatou Coundoul - Senegal

She started off by citing various examples from Senegal. Indicated that there was the introduction of legal provisions to protect children, however repression does not follow. She stressed the need to train and educate children, parents and authorities. She stated that Senegal have also adapted local content. She spoke about how the government was working with children and judges on child pornography as well as sensitising the media and schools so they can train others. Finally, she reemphasised the need for open cooperation amongst all the different actors to support children.

Patrick – Cote d'Ivoire

He spoke on arrangements in place in Côte d'Ivoire to ensure the protection of children online and stated that there is a law on electronic transactions and a law on cybercrime. He highlighted the fact that the Electronic transactions laws include personal data and a team was setup since 2009 to address online illegal activities. He also spoke about the partnership between Geneva and Cote d'Ivoire on child online protection as well as the partnership with the French police on cybercrime.

Session 3: Internet intermediaries and violence against women (Issues, challenges & Prospects)

Moderator: Aboubacar Chaibou

Nnenna Nwakanma - World Wide Web Foundation

She started off by highlighting the fact that the Internet allows for instant information. She stressed that the problems of women are still offline online. She spoke about stereotypes against women and also presented the topic from the perspective of the contribution of the Internet in the lives of women. She stressed the importance of why women need to be trained right from an early age on how to use the internet securely.

Herve Typamm - Togo

He highlighted the need for the coordination of all actions in the context of violence against women in Togo although there is currently no recent data available on the issue. He indicated that half of the girls who go online have no partner to help them. He emphasised the need for advanced education and training as effective tools to ensure the proper use of the Internet by women.

Wunmi Hassan - Nigeria

She shared with the audience the actions of her NGO in Nigeria in working towards protecting women online. She indicated that her NGO trains women in the use of ICT in Nigeria. So far, her NGO has made interventions in favour of women fifteen (15) of the (37) thirty-seven states of Nigeria. She spoke of discrimination against women in the workplace and criticized the fact that the national provisions on cybercrime were made without the involvement of women's organisations. She rounded up by stating more women need to be invited to speak publicly.

Abdourazakhe ABANI – Niger

He noted the absence of real case studies that had been conducted on this subject in Niger. However, he noted that the abuse of women is enormous. In the workplace, there is often pornographic videos on computers. He welcomed the clear vision of the African Union which has taken a convention on violence against women.

During the question and answer phase, participants' concerns were:

- The method to be adopted for providing information and training targeted on women;

- Determining the age for access to the Internet resource;
- The establishment of a framework for reporting of violence against women;
- Dialogue with girls and women about the use of the Internet;
- The good cooperation between parents and children about online life.

3.2 Sub theme: Universal Access

Session 4: Infrastructure sharing

Moderator: Sunday Folayan, AFRINIC

The moderator introduced the session by speaking about the conceptual framework that led to the desire to insist on infrastructure sharing. This is based on the requirement of availability of the universal service. The universal service requires that the service be available and usable, affordable whatever our physical state borrows handicap or not. There is neutrality of technology and the constraint of open access however good regulation should allow for wider access. His organisation have proposed the public monopoly to full market opening. The goal is to have a productive and useful to the consumer competition. The regulation must be scalable.

Prof Beidi Hamma – Niger

He started off his presentation by asking the invited participants to feed on the experience of population movement that has long existed in West Africa before the legal formalization of ECOWAS to build our internet space. He also stressed that universal access should lead to more use by governments, regulators and the institutions that exist in our sub region. He spoke about the risk that the option could be left to the single market controls of private telecommunications operators. He indicated the need to take advantage of the railway construction linking Abidjan to Lomé via Burkina Faso and Niger for installing optical fibre for digital traffic.

Mohammed Rudman – Nigeria

He illustrated a practical case of reflection on infrastructure sharing in Nigeria and mentioned that successful infrastructure sharing is based on the confidence in the regulatory framework for sharing resources. He indicated that today, with the roommate, digital service businesses can spread rapidly. Nigeria will have to regulate the sector to benefit all consumers.

Rep – Cote d'Ivoire

He provided examples of resources that Cote d'Ivoire can share with other countries in the sub region. Cote d'Ivoire notably has an internet exchange point and an IPv6 test bed.

After the presentations, participants' concerns were:

- The need for ECOWAS to facilitate a regulation to ensure the confidence of stakeholders for sharing of infrastructure;

- Use for ECOWAS to seize the railroad yard between the file in some ECOWAS countries to ensure the inclusion of telecommunications infrastructure and electrics that could benefit from inter-network promoting synergy overall reduction in civil engineering costs;
- The need to share best practices and benefit from the expertise of a network of experts on the issue of inter-network synergy on the one hand and other hand infrastructure sharing.

IANA Stewardship

Yaovi Atahoun, ICANN

The day ended with a cocktail party hosted by ICANN during which the process of transition of the IANA function to the community was reviewed. This swap space encourages the African Internet community to take an active part in the ongoing debates worldwide. Emphasis was also placed on the businesses that are available in the DNS industry and IP resources. He reviewed the functions of ICANN, spoke about the IETF and the working group in charge of the transition of the function of IANA.

Session 5: Policies and Regulatory Environment framework in West Africa

Moderator: Yaovi Atahoun, ICANN

Michuki Mwanqi - ISOC Africa

He presented ISOC as organisation and He spoke first about memberships, the staff in Africa and the chapters. He mentioned the importance of the multi-stakeholder approach because for ISOC, the Internet is for everyone. He presented the AXIS project on the Internet Exchange Program (IXP) which aims to support African countries in the installation of an IXP. He stated that one objective for West Africa is to also have an exchange point at the sub regional level. He added that a good policy and regulatory environment in the sub region is important in the implementation of a sub-regional IXP. Responding to questions from participants, he provided more information on: the relation between IETF and ISOC; how individual experts can participate in ISOC's activities and Internet exchange points in Nigeria.

3.3 Sub theme: Internet for Economic Development

Session 6: The business impact in West Africa

Moderator: Isaias Barreto da Rosa, ECOWAS Commission

Yaovi Atahoun, ICANN

He reviewed the responsibilities and involvement of his organization as ICANN is responsible for the coordination of domain names and IP resources and autonomous number. ICANN operates under a multi-stakeholder model where we can find private actors, governments, civil society, end users, academics etc. The internet savings accounts for 4% of GDP and it is important for countries to take part in activities of the GAC because the next billion internet

users will originate from Africa. He concluded by stating the factors limiting the digital economy of countries participating include: the opportunity to access to infrastructure, adoption of the Internet and literacy.

Olaniyan Olushola - FOSSFA

He presented this African organisation and stated that FOSSFA adds value at all levels of ICT development. He highlighted the impact of the internet in business in West Africa, by indicating that the time saved using Internet transactions can be leveraged for other strategic sectors. He cited studies that have shown how 60% of companies created from 2005 to date have made remarkable progress by selling online. He finished off by paraphrasing Bill Gate's statement that the internet will be the global village of tomorrow.

Sunday Folayan - AFRINIC

He reviewed the business impact of the development of the internet and indicated that where there is an opportunity there is a growing movement. He also reminded the forum that if your business goes beyond one's home, you do not know what you do with your money. He stated that banks bring an asset to business development as this can be seen by how electronic cards have revolutionised the business through the Internet. The revolution in banking is impressive with the mobile payment and we must ensure that the price is at the level of customer service and speed of desire. He rounded off by speaking about the poor state of the postal sector indicating that there is a connection between the postal service and the growth of the internet.

Raphael Koffi, ECOWAS Commission

He started off by addressing the concerns about the postal sector by informing the invited participants that work was under way on the development of an ECOWAS Master Plan for postal services which will take into account technological advances. He indicated that the rate of Internet penetration was very low in the region and the ECOWAS commission has set up a framework regulation to facilitate the development of the Internet in the region. He encouraged the transition from IPv4 to IPv6 and provided forecasts which stated that there will be around 297 million Internet users by 2019 at the ECOWAS level. He stated that the internet lowers operating costs and the internet provides a lot more flexibility in companies. He finished off his presentation by stating that the Internet also poses a threat to the world of business and that there are also challenges of communication between the major economic groups.

During the question and answer phase, concerns raised by participants included:

- Requests for clarification on the information provided in the communication;
- ECOWAS efforts on Internet governance in the region;
- Harmonisation of passports within the borders of the Member States;

- The need to help the players in the post who feel forgotten in the society of the Internet;
- The finalisation of a strategic development plan of the digital economy at the ECOWAS level;
- The movement of persons within ECOWAS.

Session 7: The social impact in West Africa

Moderator: Raphael Koffi, ECOWAS Commission

Ben Ewa – NITDA, Nigeria

He reviewed the benefits of the internet for social organisations and mentioned the need to consider regulation on the production and posting of movies online.

Salieu Mansaray – Sierra Leone

He spoke about the power of social media and how information can be dispersed instantly and spread in social networks. He mentioned the importance of social media and the significant impact during the crisis of the Ebola virus. He urged that messages be passed to our governments on how to use social media for national cohesion including north-south rivalries. He stated that Sierra Leone is working on the development of typical local applications with identical functions to the Media as created by European countries. He reiterated that we must strengthened the online presence of our institutions. He rounded up by imploring the ECOWAS Commission to encourage chambers of commerce in Member States to use social media.

Herve Typamm - Togo

He provided a brief history of the arrival of the internet in TOGO. He noted that based on a series of inquiries carried out by the national internet governance forum into the use of the Internet and places of use, the Togolese use the internet mostly to access social networks. The forum recommended including e-learning, the establishment of Internet exchange points and zero-rating of ICT equipment.

During the discussions the concerns revolved around:

- The funding of voluntary organisations, local businesses and local application developers that promote specific social networks, activities and services to the population;
- The responsibility of Member States in the promotion of ICTs in our countries;
- The formulation of guidelines for innovative people in the region

Session 8: Reports from National Representatives

Moderator: Judy Okite, WAIGF Coordinator

This session dealt with the evolution of the organisation of the IGF in ECOWAS Member States. The WAIGF Coordinator stated in her remarks that the national resource persons in

each Member State are the focal points that help spread the IGF philosophy in each country. Each resource person was invited to present the state of affairs in their country.

BENIN

There has been regular annual fora since 2012 and the organisation of the forum is coordinated by the national office of the IGF headed by a President and a Vice President. The 2015 forum will take place after the forthcoming elections in June 2015. Mobilisation of funds for the National IGF organisation were realised with contributions from government, ISOC and some private operators. The ICT and Internet sector has improved over the years in the institutional, legal, and political arena.

BURKINA FASO

Held one IGF in 2011, however since 2012 initiatives have begun to take shape to arrive at where we are today, the idea of an organisation of national law with a multi-stakeholder nature to strengthen activities. The chair is the government with a general secretariat that is rotational.

COTE D'IVOIRE

There was an associative law association but with the change of the institutional framework the regulator took over the sector hence the IGICI association no longer exists and the different actors will need to be remobilised. The sector is currently in progress of managing the point CI, the existence of a CERT and the existence of a test bench. Since the 2013 WAIGF nothing has been done as part of the organisation of the national forum on Internet governance.

LIBERIA

The national IGF was held recently, there were exchanges on freedom and law as well as online exchanges on social networks. There was also an extension of the African declaration on the rights and Internet freedoms. There is a lot of potential however more multi stakeholder engagement is required. In terms of development of the Internet, there has been progress which include the installation of cable access to public structures and there is a management framework for the Internet exchange points. These are envisaged to increase the activities of Internet governance. There is also the development of local content however there are data security challenges that have arisen in terms of authentication online.

NIGER

A committee has been in place since May 2013 with members appointed and the first national IGF held shortly after that. The IGF activities are aligned with the ICT activities and there are different projects and initiatives ongoing due to the IGF process. Recognition was accorded to the office of the National IGF forum in aiding the creation of an association to manage the Internet Exchange Point. The next national IGF is planned for the coming weeks.

NIGERIA

There has been the presence of a national IGF since 2008, however nothing happened until 2013. A forum was held in 2014 and the focus since then has been to promote the multi-actor context. There is a vibrant process ongoing with engagement of the youth in training and development sessions.

SIERRA LEONE

National forums have been held in the past. In West Africa, there is a need to build an Internet of people before an Internet of things. There has to be a mechanism in place to ensure that the final communiqué from the WAIGF is transmitted to governmental actors, ministries, regulators and others. Keen on more developments in the region, hence discussions have been held about how to get effective participation from ECOWAS in the WAIGF process and undertakes to take up the responsibility of getting Guinea involved in the activities of WAIGF.

SENEGAL

Civil society and academicians are engaged with internet governance, now the government has to be sufficiently involved as well. There is an ongoing discussion on the effective role of the state in the mechanism. Perhaps a framework needs to be set up that is not individual dependent to ensure that regardless who comes in there is continuation.

TOGO

The initiative for the IGF is driven by the ISOC chapter. The first forum was held in 2011 and the 4th edition will be held October/November 2015. It is planned to train the actors involved in Internet governance during the 2015 IGF. The implementation of the forum communiqués/recommendations is a major challenge.

In summary, the moderator encouraged support for the national representatives to maintain the progress made to date and stated improvement suggestions can be made to ensure the sustainability of the WAIGF process.

Comments from Partners

The representative of the ECOWAS Commission expressed pleasure in working with the WAIGF and encouraged the participation of all Member States to reinforce their national process so that all stakeholders are represented. The ECOWAS commission will continue to accompany the WAIGF on this internet governance journey.

The representative from the World Wide Web Foundation was thanked for all her contributions to date and in response she took the floor to welcome the progress that has been made by the WAIGF. She indicated that as part of the governance of the Internet, the actions do not often come from governments but from civil society or companies but that the most important to do is to get together to make things move forward.

The ICANN representative was pleased to support and participate in the WAIGF. He stated his organisation looks forward to seeing what ECOWAS can do for the WAIGF as their presence will facilitate the accession of Member States. He hoped that the countries who have made little progress, will do so with innovation.

The ISOC representative reiterated that his organisation will continue to support the WAIGF and national IGFs. He also emphasised the need to contribute to the establishment of a political relationship with the billion internet connection project.

The representative of AFRINIC stated his organisation had traditional members and what we do today has an impact on future generations. He urged participants to join AFRINIC and contribute to how policies are implemented. He stated AFRINIC coordinates resources for the African region and it is a trusted source. He indicated that AFRINIC also provides capacity building to stakeholders in the community which is available free of charge for everyone and AFRINIC promotes Internet innovative initiatives with its FIRE program.

In conclusion, the WAIGF coordinator recalled that efforts must be intensified to improve the WAIGF mechanism and the session ended with the reading of the final declaration by the representative of the WAIGF 2015 secretariat.

4 8TH WAIGF

The High Commissioner for ICT of the Niger Republic, and on behalf of The Niger IGF, announced that Niger was proposing to host the 8th WAIGF in 2016. He stated that their candidature was as the result of two facts:

1. In the preparatory process Niger has very positive and close consultations between all Internet stakeholders for the development of the internet.
2. The process will be headed by the Government of the Niger Republic, who he was representing to promote ICT nationwide and to enhance regional collaboration in Africa.

For this, a working group has been constituted headed by the IGF Niger, including CSOs, Telcos, ICT Companies, Academics, and of course different ministries involved in the issues of ICT and Internet (development)

He indicated that Niger plans to organise the WAIGF in early July 2016 and invited all the partners to help make this a reality.

4.1 2016 WAIGF

It was unanimously decided that the 8th edition of the WAIGF be held at an agreed date in July 2016 in the Niger Republic.

Done in Abuja, on 19 June 2015

