

THE AFRICAN UNION OPEN FORUM 2018

June 2018

I. Background

The African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF) was formally launched by the African Union and the UN Economic Commission for Africa on 30 September 2011 during the 6th Internet Governance Forum, held in Nairobi, Kenya. From that date, AfIGF has been organized successfully every year.

Experience gained during the various AfIGF conferences, demonstrated that in order to translate the recommendations of AfIGF into concrete actions by African member States and other regional stakeholders, it was necessary that diplomatic leverage be applied to the African Union political leadership to further advance the African stakeholders' ambitions and aspirations. This prompted the 4th ordinary session of the African Union Conference of Ministers in charge of Communication and Information Technologies (CITMC-4) held in Sudan in September 2012 to request Member States *'to support the establishment of national IGF to create dialogue between all stakeholders on ICT for development issues and facilitate the countries' participation in the regional and African IGF processes as well as in the global IGF'*.

The Khartoum declaration led to the stepping up of IGFs at all levels on the continent while at the same time underlining the geopolitical and strategic importance of the process, which prompted preparation by all stakeholders of the African Union Declaration on Internet Governance, adopted by the African Union Head of States in their January 2018 Summit. This declaration is seen as a means to strengthen the Internet Governance processes in Africa and involvement of the African Union in IG processes globally.

II. African IGF Open Forum 2017

The African Union organized the African IGF Open Forum on 20 December 2017 at the IGF held in Geneva, Switzerland. It was attended by 95 participants.

The main aim of the Open Forum was to facilitate exchange of good practices between African sub-regional IGFs (Central Africa, North Africa, and West Africa), on their

processes, especially the successes and failures and the way forward, taking into account the multistakeholder dimension of IGF and to share the Key achievements of the 6th African IGF, held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, under the theme “*Enabling an Inclusive Digital Transformation of Africa*”.

The Forum was also used to discuss implementation of the African IGF Charter, the African Union Declaration on Internet Governance and the African Union project on IG Capacity Building.

In view of the success of the 2017 Open Forum, the African Union plans to organize an Open Forum in 2018.

African Union Open Forum 2018

The African Union plans to convene the 7th African Internet Governance Forum in October 2018 in Khartoum, Sudan. The annual conference will be followed by the African Union Open Forum 2018 to be held in the venue of the global IGF (not yet decided).

The objectives of the Open Forum are to:

- share the outcome of the 7th AfIGF and of the sub-regional African IGFs;
- discuss implementation of the African IGF Charter, including the AfIGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group (AFIGF-MAG);
- discuss implementation of the African Union Declaration on Internet Governance and;
- secure views of participants on the exchange of information, including use of the African IGF e-platform, which was recommended by the African Open Forum 2017.

Like in 2017, the African Union Open Forum is expected to be attended by a broad stakeholders' representation across government, private sector, academia, technical communities, civil society, media, regional and international organizations.

Panelists will be derived from: AfIGF 2018 host country (Mohammed Yusif, Sudan), the African Union Commission (Moctar Yedaly & Adil Sulieman), the secretariat of the African IGF (Makane Faye), the AfIGF-MAG (Lilian Nalwoga), sub-regional IGFs (Mary Uduma), etc.

At the end of the Forum it is expected that the voices of all stakeholders on IG issues are heard and that the way forward to the African IGF 2019 and the global IGF is drawn.