PRIDA

Policy and Regulation Initiative for Digital Africa

Africa Union Commission (AUC) Workshop on Building Trust in the African Digital Ecosystem at the Global IGF 2nd -17th November 2020 – Virtual meeting

Trusted Digital Space via PRIDA –Informed Transformed Africa (WS43)-
9th November – 12:10-13:40 UTC (Room III)

Background Information

Africa has made major headway in developing its digital ecosystem in the past decade culminating in the adoption by the African Union Heads of State and Government of the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa 2020-2030 early this year. Nonetheless, there is still an evident gap among AU Member States in terms of digital maturity, awareness, understanding, knowledge and capacity to deploy and adopt the proper strategies, capabilities and programs to mitigate cyber threats. The ongoing digital transformation in Africa will not provide the desired social and economic benefits unless Africans have access to a secure and trusted Internet.

The rapid growth of the Internet has created new opportunities that can be exploited. However, because of the apparent digital divide, the benefits are not reaching all Africans equally leaving some communities and groups behind. Another dimension to consider, is that while digital technologies expand the possibilities for people to enjoy freedoms and the right to information and knowledge access, as people come on line they face a number of potential harms from the use of their data without their consent and lack of protection of their personal data, to illegitimate commercial and state surveillance, cybercrime and cyber terrorism. Information and data governance and cybersecurity need to be a top priority for all governments . The African Union recognises cyber security and data protection as an integral and indivisible part of technological and digital revolution. These safeguards are esential to creating the trusted environment necessary for e-commerce, e-government and digital services generally to take off. Digital inclusion, with the necessary protections for citizens will be an essential lever in post-COVID-19 economic reconstruction across the continent and a determinant of the degree to which countries will able to benefit from the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

In 2014, the African Union Commission adopted the Malabo Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection to provide fundamental principles and guidelines to ensure an effective protection of personal data and create a safe digital environment for citizens' security and privacy of individuals' online data. This is considered an important first step in establishing a uniform system of data processing and determining a common set of rules to govern cross-border transfer of data to avoid divergent regulatory approaches between the African Union Member States and ensure a safe digital space for Africans. This will also facilitate any data transfer agreements involving other continents/states. However, despite the development of these important 'trust' instruments, only 8 countries have ratified the convention, limiting its implementation and harmonising effects across the continent.

What would be intended agenda for the session.

The session will focus on trust and Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) in cyberspace in the context of Africa. This workshop will be a forum to discuss issues of trust that hinders the use and utilization by the AUC member states of the advanced data-driven digital services, available globally such as Internet of Things (IOT), big data, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and

machine learning. The workshop will highlight the challenges and opportunities presented by the global processes of digitalisation and datafication and the role that the public, private sector, media, academia and the civil society can play in developing the governance frameworks necessary for the creation of a safe and trusted online space for all to flourish. Amongst other aspects of global and regional collaboration, the Malabo convention shall be discussed and opportunities presented to member states by ratifying it highlighted.

This is premised on the fact that the nature of the Internet and how it is organized affects its security and influences people's perceptions, interactions and how freely data flows. To fully embrace the digital revolution, Africa must devise an integrated and comprehensive strategy, involving all stakeholders in the region, from the public, private sectors, academia and the civil society. A prerequisite to the success of this effort is building trust and confidence in the digital space. Without a reliable and secure Internet, there will be no online or digital trust, considering that digital devices are easily used for illegitimate purposes including commercial and state surveillance and espionage. Trust is undermined by various incidences in the digital value chain. Frameworks have to be able to accommodate both individual and collective interests. With the current COVID-19 pandemic, mass surveillance has increased, where governments are tracking movement of people and their contacts, mobile network operators are sharing geo-location data and the global tech companies are sharing location maps. The need for measure that safeguards private information of citizens under these circumstances will determine the degree to which individuals comply, report and utilize pandemic containing and contact tracing apps. E-health and telemedicine applications including Artificial Intelligence powered diagnostics are on the rise. Users who range from individuals in businesses or in their own capacity, academia, civil society, private and the public sector will need to trust the digital space and have confidence that their data and information will be used for the common good.

The session will attempt to answer the following policy questions

1. What is the role of continental organizations such as the African Union Commission in building trust in the Cyberspace for member states to confidently engage? What is the role of the member states? How can African Member States be cyber resilient and develop cyber defense policies, strategies and capabilities? How can we build and improve trust among the African stakeholders in the Cyberspace?
2. Digital inequality continues to constraint the participation of the majority of Africans in the digital economy and society. This extends beyond the issues of connectivity, though that is a precondition, to demand stimulation through creating an enabling environment for local content, apps and platforms that meet the needs and demand of Africans. A trusted environment is a preconditions of this. However, creating a trusted environment in a global market requires far greater awareness of the known harms associated with online services and frameworks to mitigate the possible risks. The global nature of these, require a global governance response. Yet, Africans' active presence and participation in the global digital governance has been uneven and limited. Improving multistakeholder participation in national, regional and global governance is critical to creating the necessary trust on which digital 'take off' is premised. How can this be done?
3. With the exponential growth of digital technologies globally, how can African states reap maximum benefits while trying to remain sovereign? How can the emerging technologies address issues related to peace and stability? Why is it relevant for Africa to get involved and play a role in discussions about norms and CBMs.

4. What Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) should stakeholders in cyberspace advance to reduce and eliminate causes of mistrust, fear, misunderstanding, misinformation and miscalculation that may stem from the use of Digital technologies? What are the responsibilities of public authorities in regulating or policing content, and where and how should the balance be struck between freedom of expression and public safety?
5. Could ratification of Malabo Convention be the panacea for a united continent with shared norms, standards and principles, providing a common voice and a base for trust building across the continent?
6. Use of digital currencies ranging from mobile money to credit cards has been a lifeline during the COVID-19 pandemic, what structures should African States put in place, including policies and strategies for continuity in a trusted digital space.
7. How do we balance the tensions between freedom of expression, privacy and security? What should be the norms, standards and principles of responsible behavior in cyberspace? What is the role of information regulation and how can this be harmonized across the continent in support of the single market and AU commitments to representative and participatory democracy? Should these norms, standards and principles be contextualized to address the local environment?
8. Children are at more risk when exposed to the digital space without adequate and comprehensive policies and strategies to safeguard their interests. The risks include sexual exploitation, radicalization and distribution of extremism materials. What possible measures can mitigate their plight?

How will discussions be facilitated during the session.

This will be a 90 minutes' panel discussion. There will be five panelists and a moderator. The moderator will have 5 minutes to introduce the session. After which each panelist will be given 4 minutes to make introductory remarks that will be focused towards broad issues highlighted. The moderator will then ask specific questions to the panelists that will take 20 minutes. The floor will be opened to the public for a Q&A session that will take 35 minutes. The panelist will then have 10 minutes to make closing remarks. It is approximated that the session will have close to 100 participants

What are the expected outcomes and any specific outputs from the session?

(e.g. publications, or follow up events or processes) the session would produce or feed into?

- The workshop will produce a report to be posted among others in the African IGF and PRIDA website and other appropriate websites
- The workshop deliberations shall inform African 2021 national, regional and continental IGFs and PRIDA capacity building initiatives across the continent.
- Through the workshop, awareness will be created on the Malabo convention and opportunities and challenges explored.

Relevance to Internet Governance

The workshop will contribute towards strengthening the African voice in the global debate on Internet governance, making African issues a priority which in turn has the potential to make global Internet policies and standards more appropriate to the African context. This would create a more viable and conducive environment for digital innovations and mainstreaming digital technologies in all development sectors.

Relevance to Thematic Trust

Successful implementation of Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and AU Agenda 2063 aspirations calls for sufficient trust in the online space. In particular, goal 9 focuses on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation while goal 17 focuses on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing Global Partnerships for Sustainable Development. Innovation and global partnership in the digital age can only flourish in a space where stakeholders are confident with the security of infrastructure and integrity of the processes to ensure that data and information derived is trustworthy.

Workshop Proposers

1) *Dr. Margaret Nyambura Ndung'u*
2) *Mr. Adil Sulieman*

Workshop Co-Organizers

1) Mr. Adil Sulieman
2) Dr. Margaret Nyambura Ndung'u
3) Ms. Hanane Boujemi
4) Ms. Aicha Jeridi
5) Mr. Peterking Quaye
6) Mr. Barack Otieno
7) Mr. Makane Faye

Proposed panelists/speakers (3-5). 3 must have been contacted and agreed to be in the panel before submission of the proposal on 15th April (***Diversity in sector, gender, age, disability, region etc encouraged).***

1) Mr. Abdul-Hakeem Ajijola - Chair of AUCSEG (Private sector)
2) Mr. Moctar Yedaly - Head ISD Division, AUC (IGO)
3) Dr. Nnenna Ifeanyi-Ajufo - Vice chair of AUCSEG (Academia)
4) Mr. Vladimir Radunovic – DiPLO Foundation
5) Dr. Alison Gillwald Executive Director - Research ICT Africa

Workshop Moderator(s)

1) Mr. Adil Sulieman
2) Ms. Hanane Boujemi
3) Dr. Margaret Nyambura Ndung'u

Workshop Rapporteur(s)

1) Mr. Peterking Quaye
2) Ms. Aicha Jeridi
3) Mr. Barack Otieno

PRIDA IG Implementation Policy Brief

This policy brief is based on PRIDA's OUTPUT 3: African stakeholders' active participation in the global internet governance debate and their impact in shaping global policies and setting standards.

***PRIDA IG track envisions* a s**treamlined Internet public policy development processes at national, regional and continental levels culminating to influential and coordinated participation of the African Continent in Global Internet Governance debates.

To achieve this vision, PRIDA aims at streamlining National, Regional and Continental IG processes for a common progressive African position - supported by Capacity Building and Coaching Services. A Digital Platform being developed under PRIDA will host the Capacity Building and Coaching Services content. The following are the strategic objectives:

1. To increase the number of countries having multi-stakeholder processes on IG through the establishment of national IG Fora
2. To streamline and coordinate IG processes at national, regional and continental levels and improve synergies and feedback mechanism between them
3. To capacitate various Internet stakeholders' groups from governments, civil society, private sector and the technical community on IG matters
4. To improve the quality of decisions made by policy makers and Diplomats on IG issues through coaching services before and during International meetings where decisions are taken.

Despite IGF initiatives at the National (29), Regional (5) and Continental level (1), African participation at the IG space has been limited. As a result, there is no common voice or position from the continent at the global IGF and Internet related discussions. Consequently, the impact of African participation from agenda setting to effective resolutions from the fora has not been felt. Worth noting is that organizations working on IG issues in African from the national, regional and continental level lack the necessary skills and capacity to carry out important governance functions, such as providing valuable technical and policy information, training and capacity development; and evidence based research on Internet policy.

That being the case, PRIDA will focus on two pillars:

The first Pillar is on Strengthening and Streamlining the Internet Governance Structures: ***The IG structures at the national, regional and continental level are not harmonized and coordinated to create synergies that would facilitate a strong Africans' participation at the Global level.*** PRIDA will:

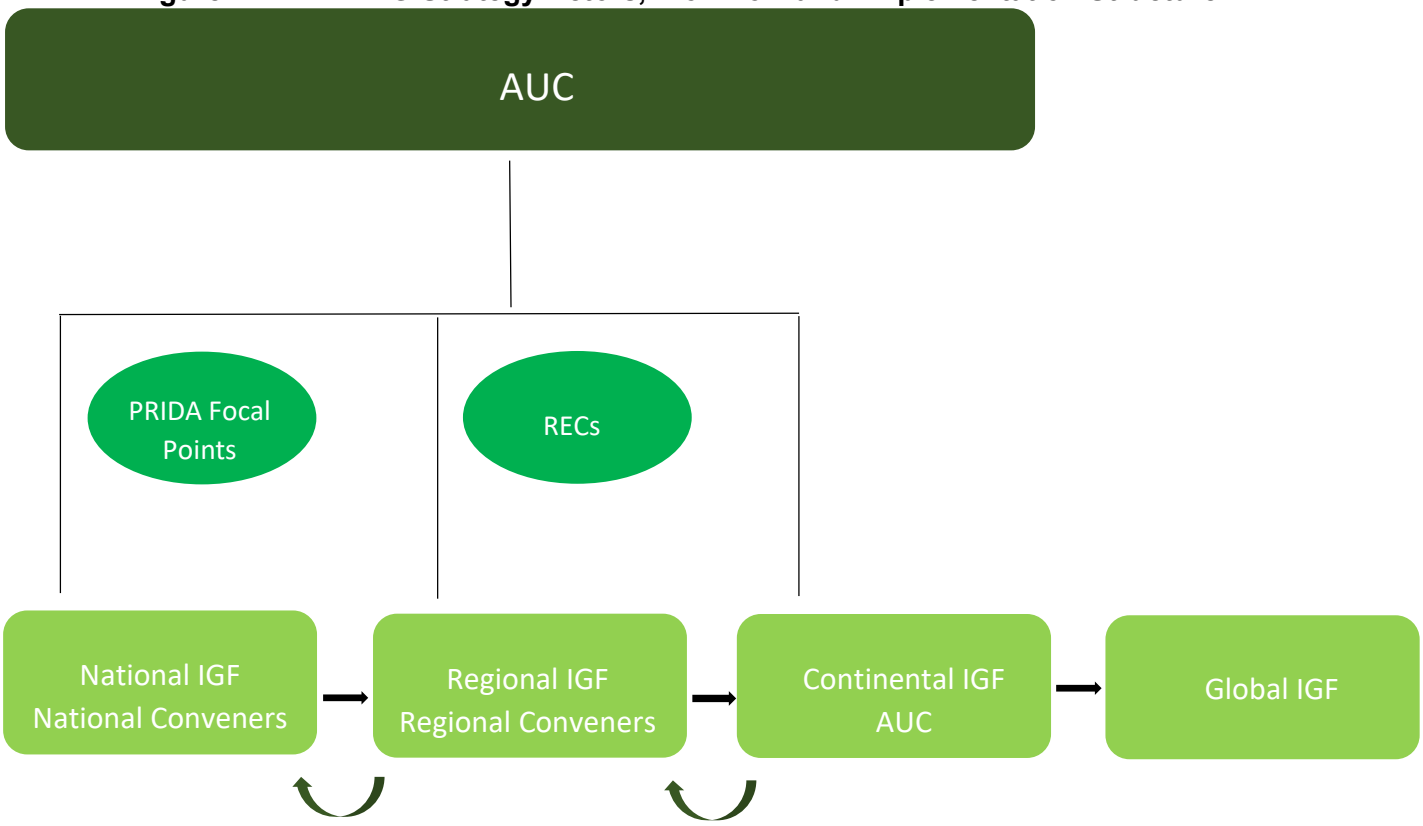
1. Strengthen and harmonize the IG structures and processes from a national, regional and continental perspective;

2. Schedule IGFs logically with synergies that ensures a top down and bottom up feeding mechanism to streamline the structures;

3. From the national perspective, different activities and outcomes shall be expected between those countries that have already established IGF initiatives from those countries that have not yet established.

The implementation of this strategy will take a multi-stakeholder approach from the national, regional and continental level with the various stakeholders in the IG value chain taking responsibility of various activities and being accountable for the outcomes. Figure 1 shows the implementation structure.

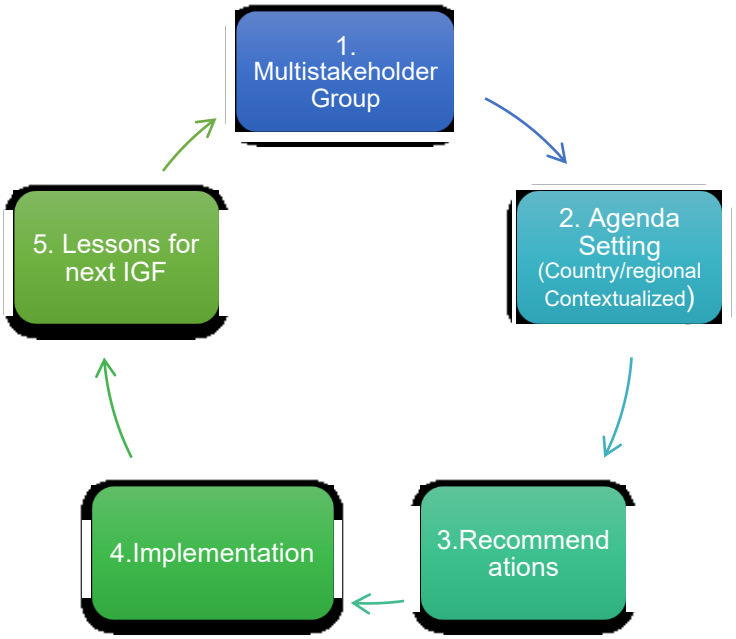
Figure 1: PRIDA IG Strategy Actors, Workflow and Implementation Structure



Source: Authors

There are five main steps to be followed in setting structures and processes of national, regional and continental IG fora: Figure 2 demonstrates the flow of the activities.

Figure 2: IGF Process Cycle



Source: Authors

The second pillar is on Capacity Building and Coaching Services: ***Currently there are no sustainable structures to support capacity building and coaching activities for the IG community, diplomats and policy makers at the National, Regional and Continental level in preparation for meetings, to ensure a common progressive continental position. At the same time, the complicated nature of the IG issues requires adequate preparation before International meetings.*** To address this challenge, PRIDA is:

- Working on online IG content for the African Internet Community
- Working on online IG content for the Diplomats
- Conducting a study on the sustainability of the IG schools at the national, regional and continental level.
- Working on modalities to support national institutions to provide continuous training on IG in the five African regions

Coaching services shall be provided to policy officers and diplomats from AU member states to facilitate negotiations before and during International meetings where decisions specific to Internet governance would be made. In addition to other avenues, PRIDA shall leverage on the expertise from the African Union Cyber Security Expert Group (AUCSEG) whose mandate is to advise the AUC in matters related to Cyber security; Cyber-legislations and regulations; online privacy and data protection; and related digital policy issues.

- The methodology of work will be based on a flexible approach that ensures production of customized trainings on negotiations which fits the context and needs of AU member states.
- Digital policy clinic shall be established with an on demand support to respond to policy related questions and provide customized advice on specific issues to member states