



**MEDIA STATEMENT ON THE
SOUTHERN AFRICA INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM 2014 (SAIGF-14)
GOLDEN PEACOCOK HOTEL
LILONGWE, MALAWI
17th – 19th SEPTEMBER 2014**

The Southern Africa Internet Governance Forum 2014 (SAIGF-14) was convened from 17th to 19th September 2014 in Lilongwe, Malawi. This high level multi-stakeholder event on emerging issues on Internet Governance (IG) in SADC was hosted by the Government of Malawi. The SAIGF-14 was co-convened by SADC Secretariat in conjunction with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Agency, the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and the Southern African NGO Network (SANGONET) under the theme "Internet Governance as a Building Block of SADC Regional Integration".

The SAIGF-14 was attended by Delegates from nine (9) SADC Member States namely; Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Kingdom of Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Forum was also attended by representatives from the SADC Implementing Agencies (technical community); Communications Regulators' Association for Southern Africa (CRASA) and Southern Africa Telecommunications Association (SATA), the private sector, civil society, academia and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

Official Opening

The SAIGF-14 was officially opened by the Honourable Kondwani Nankhumwa, MP, the Minister of Information, Tourism and Culture of the Republic of Malawi. The official opening ceremony was also attended by the Secretary for e-Government, Mrs. Olive Chikankheni.

In his keynote address, the Honourable Minister reminded delegates that ICT is a very important aspect in our daily lives as it is a sector that cuts across many sectors. He acknowledged the difficulty to execute regional integration and harmonisation in the absences of ICT applications and systems. He said that despite the benefits offered by ICT, we need to guard against abuse and misuse of Internet Resources, especially when it can lead to catastrophic effects to our young people. He indicated that the SAIGF-14 could not have been held at a better time when the region is grappling with challenges facing the ICT sector. The SAIGF-14 provides the Southern Africa an opportunity to share experience, challenges and best practices and together we can strategise on interventions to address such issues and to ensure that the citizens of SADC have access to timely and relevant information and that they also participate in the development, governance and democratic processes in the region. The SAIGF-14 will also enhance capacity to identify and discuss issues relating to Internet Governance and ICT Policy. He concluded by re-affirming the commitment of Malawi towards harnessing the powers of the ICT for socio-economic development at all levels and universal access to ICT products and services. SADC Citizens should recognise the importance and benefits of harnessing the powers of ICT for socio-economic development. This may be achieved through the facilitation of the multi stakeholder dialogue on the management and development of the Internet.

Mr. James Madya, representative of the Chairperson of the SADC, Zimbabwe, reminded the Delegates of the Internet Governance structures that are being implemented in the SADC region starting from the grass root level in Member States with the setting up of National IGFs, feeding to the SAIGF, Africa IGF (AfIGF) and ultimately the Global IGF. This is how voice of Southern Africa is being heard all the way up to the highest forum of the IGF.

Dr. Edmund Katiti, the Head of the NEPAD e-Africa Programme stipulated that Africa needs to have a coordinated and effective voice in the way the Internet is governed and thus NEPAD's involvement in the regional, continental and global IGFs as well as the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) processes. He gave a brief on the role of the NEPAD e-African Programme and reported that NEPAD Agency is working closely with the APC, supported by several stakeholders in the establishment of the first African School on Internet Governance (AfriSIG) as a pre-event to the ICANN47 in Durban, South Africa. With more support now obtained, the next edition of the AfriSIG will take place in Mauritius during the last week of November 2014.

Speaking on behalf of SADC Secretariat, the Programme Officer - Telecommunications Dr. George Ah-Thew, recalled that in June 2011, in Botswana the Honourable SADC ICT Ministers requested the establishment of the SAIGF in order to ensure that the views and voices of Southern Africa were represented at the 6th Global IGF in 2011. The inaugural meeting of the SAIGF was convened in September 2011 in South Africa. The SAIGF-14 is the third event of its kind. He also recalled that in November 2012, in Mauritius the SADC ICT Ministers urged Member States to set up their National IGFs so that they may contribute input towards the SAIGF. He noted that some Member States such as Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa have responded to this call.

He highlighted that the Internet is one of the discoveries with the highest impact. It radically transformed the ICT sector but more importantly, it deeply impacts our economy and society. The Internet owes much of its success to how it has been governed. He noted that the Internet access rates are still relatively high and he urged stakeholders to continue their efforts in making Internet access more affordable. Dr. George Ah-Thew thanked the Government of Malawi for hosting the SAIGF-14 and for the leadership they have demonstrated in the implementation of the SADC ICT Programme. He also thanked the NEPAD Agency for supporting the participation of some delegates to the SAIGF-14.

Recommendations

The SAIGF-014 included of a Thematic Workshop on dotAfrica and the Evolving IG Ecosystem - gTLD and Implications for ccTLDs. The forum discussed the following IGF themes and made the following recommendations:

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR IGF

- IG issues need to be integrated into the education system.
- Member States need to be informed in time about the courses to be offered so that they can contribute.
- There is a need to create Regional Repository related to IG.
- Students need to be given a chance to share experiences during workshops.
- The programme needs to adopt to a localised version of IG.

OPERATIONALING THE SAIGF

- Promote cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder cooperation in the establishment of the NIGFs.
- Promote the importance of public awareness and education on Internet governance issues and increasing capacity of consumer bodies.

POLICIES ENABLING ACCESS AND DIVERSITY

- Member States are encouraged to grow their NIXP into RIXPs.
- Promote open access and deployment of cost-effective wireless technologies in the digital dividend bands that will be released due to the Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) migration.

INTERNET AS AN ENGINE FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Promote the growth of local Domain Name System (DNS) industry, Member States are urged to automate the domain registration process so as to make it easy for local people to register local domain names. Having more people using local domains will bring the cost of local domain names lower, making it possible for even more people to acquire local domain names.

- There is a need to address the digital illiteracy challenge in order to deal with public access.
- Promote sustainable public Internet access at libraries and post office, especially in the rural areas.
- Member States are encouraged to share best practices on how to improve Internet access for all sectors among the Member States.
- Member States must adopt access and affordability policies that foster unfettered and non-discriminatory access to the Internet, including universal service requirements and licensing agreements.
- Internet companies operating in Africa are encouraged to invest in online tools, software and applications that enhance local and intercultural content exchange, and simplify the exchange of information across language barriers.
- Member States are encouraged to ensure an enabling policy environment and coordination between different government departments to ensure public access is promoted

CONTENT CREATION, DISSEMINATION AND USE

- Africans should use African ccTLDs and African Governments should take the lead on this.
- African ccTLDs should lower their rates in order to attract more domain registrations.
- Africans should develop more local applications and put more African content online, and where possible have local content in local languages.

IGF AND THE FUTURE OF THE INTERNET ECOSYSTEM

- African Governments should support the Dot Africa initiative since the emergence of the Dot Africa gTLD does not in any way threaten ccTLD as witnessed in Asia and Europe when the .Asia and .EU were launched.
- Although most Southern Africa Governments have nominated focal points for the compilation of Reserved Names List (RNL) under the Dot Africa RNL initiative, the meeting noted that some Governments were still to provide entries for the RNL. Member States that have not nominated focal points for the RNL are urged to send their nomination letter to the African Union Commission (AUC) and South Africa Central Registry (ZACR) and to also prepare their Dot Africa's RNL.
- Participation by all interested parties and informed stakeholders in the SAIGF provides the opportunity to continue to practice and perfect the multi-stakeholder co-operation.
- To ensure the continued security, stability, and resilience of the Internet, governance structures and principles must be developed and there should be strong co-operation among all stakeholders, each contributing a perspective, informed by their respective roles and responsibilities
- Undertake benchmarking with the new gTLD guidebook that has set very high standards and stringent measures for new gTLD applicants in order to ensure high standards in ccTLDs. Governments and other stakeholders may use the same criteria.
- ccTLD Registries need to remain alert and responsive to heightened competition.
- Urge ICANN to provide clarity on the Independent Review Process (IRP) process including expected timelines.
- Stakeholders urged to participate in consultations on the transition stewardship of Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA).
- Stakeholders need to uphold the IG principles that came out of the Net-Mundial and foster discussions on issue that were left for further discussions.

ENHANCING DIGITAL TRUST

- Encourage Member States to undertake the national transpositions of the SADC Cyber Security Model Laws.
- Facilitate dialogue among stakeholders and create awareness on privacy and consumer protection on the Internet.
- Promote more capacity building on cyber security and cyber crime.
- Promote collaboration between stakeholders to fight against cyber crime.
- Promote child on-line protection and safety.

INTERNET AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- The broader uptake of human rights discourse at the IGF made it possible for more diverse rights and development centric discussions to take place at the event including discussions of women's rights issues.
- Many panels lacked regional diversity and in particular insufficient voices from African Governments.
- Member States are encouraged to ensure that all Internet-related laws and policies are clear, transparent and uphold human rights.
- Member States should encourage and monitor the participation of women and girls in all areas related to Internet development and governance.
- All African stakeholders, including regional and sub-regional bodies, Governments, civil society organisations, media institutions, relevant technology and Internet companies, should formally endorse the African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms.
- The technical community is encouraged to engage actively in the multi-stakeholder processes that deal with human rights as well as IG in Africa and provide policy inputs to Internet-related issues.

Closing Ceremony

Mrs Olive Chikankheni, the Secretary for e-Government of Malawi closed the SAIGF-14. She expressed her satisfaction to the good dialogue that took place on the various themes of the SAIGF and encouraged participants to be involved in the AfIGF and Global IGF processes to ensure that we defend the regional interests on Internet Governance issues and we are able to influence the outcomes of such meetings.

Mr. Mogomotsi Banabotlhe, representative of the SADC Vice-Chairperson, Botswana offered his vote of thanks to the Government and people of Malawi.

19th September 2014
LILONGWE, MALAWI