

Alice Munyua

Convener, East Africa Internet Governance forum (EA-IGF)

Kigali 17-18 August 2011

Hon. Dr. Ignace Gatare; Minister of Information and Communications Technology,

Hon. Senator Gasamagera Wellars,

Patrick Kabagema; Chairman RICTA,

Distinguished Guests,

Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is with great pleasure that I stand here today at the forth EA-IGF and I wish to thank you for this opportunity to be here and to speak. I would like to especially thank Hon Minister and RICTA for hosting this forth edition of the regional IGF.

I also wish to thank Senator Gasamagera Wellars, who presented Rwanda's expression of interest to host this forum last year and for his support.

The forum continues to be a valuable platform for raising awareness, engaging stakeholders on Internet governance and informing policy. I hope it will continue to provide and realize even greater opportunities as it evolves.

The EA-IGF was conceptualized and convened by the Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet) in 2008, through an IDRC funded project, CICEWA. The second EA-IGF was also organized and held in Kenya in 2009. The third was hosted by Uganda in 2010. These regional IGFs bring together stakeholders from Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi, Uganda, and Kenya.

The EA-IGF model follows a bottom up multi-stakeholder approach, which begins at the national level with virtual discussions, followed by national face-to-face IGFs to continue discussions, validate the issues identified and begin to explore recommendations and solutions. The national IGFs then form the building block for the regional East African IGF. Outcomes of both the national and regional IGFs contribute to discussions at the global IGFs.

Global IGF

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was created as a new arena for multi-stakeholder dialogue about Internet-related international public policy issues. These issues include, among others, critical Internet resources, the security and safety of the Internet, and developmental aspects and issues affecting the use of the Internet.

One of the fascinating aspects of the Internet during its development and early growth was its unique governance. The Internet started as a government project of

the “Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)Net)” By the 1980s, a wider international community was using the facilities and by this time it was referred to as the Internet. In 1986, the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) was established and it managed the further development of the Internet through a cooperative, consensus-based, decision-making process involving a wide variety of individuals. There was no central government, no central planning, and no grand design, yet the network continued to expand around the world.

Then in 1994 the US National Science Foundation involved the private sector by subcontracting the management of the Domain Name System (DNS) to Network Solutions Inc (NSI), a decision not well received by the Internet community at the time. At the same time, 1994/95 saw the Internet grow rapidly around the world and so other players from the business sector, international organizations, and other governments started to pay attention and to get involved. By 1998 this led to the creation of a new organization, the Internet Company for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

Since 1998 and the establishment of ICANN, the debate on Internet Governance has been characterized by the more intensive involvement of national governments at ICANN level through the GAC and also through the UN framework including the ITU and the Internet Governance Forum.

The IGF is a result of rather tense discussions held during the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held in Geneva and Tunis between 2002 and 2005, there was controversy over the role of governments in the oversight on how policy for the Internet was developed, and particularly over ICANN. The outcome was to see Internet governance issues officially placed on the diplomatic agenda and a number of actions proposed, among them the establishment of a new forum, the IGF, as a space for dialogue about the policy issues effecting the development and deployment of the Internet. The Forum was designed to ensure the full and active participation of governments, the private sector, and civil society from both developing and developed countries.

The UN Secretary General convenes the IGF and meetings are held under the UN flag. During its initial five-year mandate meetings have been held in Greece in 2006, Brazil in 2007, India 2008, Egypt 2009 and fifth Lithuania in 2010. The 2012 meeting is expected to be held in Azerbaijan.

The sixth Global IGF will be held in Nairobi in September 27-30 and it will be the first time an IGF is being held in a sub Saharan African country. So we welcome the development agenda and focus of the Forum, but this does not mean the other issues/themes are not equally important.

The main theme for the 2011 Nairobi IGF is “**Internet as a catalyst for change: access, development, freedoms and innovation**”. The sub-themes are: Internet Governance for development, Managing critical Internet resources, Security openness and privacy, Access and diversity. In addition, over 90 workshops and side events will be held covering a broad range of internet policy and technology issues, with each event organized by a global, multi-stakeholder team of experts. The forum will be held at the UN complex in Nairobi. Everyone is welcome. Registration is open except we want as many East Africans to participate in the main sessions and the various workshops.

Last year, the UN General Assembly renewed the mandate for the global IGF for a further 5 years and endorsed the multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance. However, there is a need to seriously consider support for the IGF beyond just multi stakeholder dialogue to include financial support for its activities and not just at the secretariat level. In the spirit of the multi-stakeholder IGF model, the forum/process needs support from private sector, industry, technical community and civil society.

This multi-stakeholder model has provided opportunities and a platform for various stakeholders to discuss sometimes quite challenging policy and political issues, and Governments should not be expected to support this process alone. There must be a willingness to support more than just the dialogue but ensuring full engagement of stakeholders from our region and other developing countries to ensure relevance and diversity in participation and contribution. After all, the Internet is a global resource and is a key infrastructure for development. So other stakeholders need to provide that much needed support for the sustainability of this model.

The IGF is not a negotiating forum but at the regional level we have discussed it severally that it does need to have certain level of impact. Also taking into consideration that multi stakeholder processes are more felt and have more impact at the local level, it will be important for us to discuss how we envisage the future of the EA-IGF and the role it should play in Internet governance and policy processes at the national and regional level.

Future of the EA-IGF

As mentioned earlier the EA-IGF was conceptualized and convened by KICTANet and the organization and KICTANet has led fundraising for the last four years. KICTANet has not only enabled EA stakeholders to meet and discuss issues of IG but has continued to include other critical stakeholders, among them members of parliament. We have also had great support from development partners IDRC, JICA, GLOCOM, UNECA, international industry and technical community: AT&T, ISOC, Nominet, among others.

Since 2009, there has been ongoing discussions regarding developing a more sustainable model, we welcome these discussions. It will be important to begin to consider not only what type of process and structure we would like to have for the EA-IGF, but also and perhaps more importantly what type of internet we would want to have to ensure that it contributes to the region's development.

Thank you