

Forth Kenya IGF 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2011

**Speech by Honorable Eng. James Rege, M.P, Chair, Parliamentary  
Select Committee on Energy, Transport, Information,  
Communication, and Public Works**

Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak at the fourth Kenya Internet Governance Forum (4<sup>th</sup> KIGF).

I wish to thank Alice Munyua and her team for working so diligently to put us on the Internet governance global map and to thank the government for having set up the Kenya Internet Governance Steering committee to coordinate the hosting of the 6<sup>th</sup> United Nations IGF meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011 and to continue to increase our visibility in the various Internet Governance and policy related processes, including ICANN and IGF.

The IGF provides space for dialogue by all stakeholders on Internet public policy matters. The multi-stakeholder approach of the IGF is a unique model aimed at ensuring inclusiveness in discussions of Internet issues and it is a model that has worked quite well for the ICT sector in Nairobi. Recalling the ICT policy process in 2006 where civil society, Private sector and Government worked together.

In year 2008 we launched both the National Kenya IGF (KIGF) and the East Africa (regional) IGF (EA-IGF) processes. The KIGF attracted participants from the public sector, private sector, academia and civil society, while the EA-IGF brought together participants from Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Burundi.

Since year 2008, I have led East African Members of Parliament participation in national, regional and global (United Nations) IGF processes. During these IGF meetings, we have held various MP's round table sessions. And these MP's round table sessions have introduced Internet policy issues and also curved a role for parliamentarians in the national, regional and global Internet governance debate. As representatives of the public interest and the link between national concerns and local constituencies where the impact of these great changes is most keenly felt, parliamentarians are key participants and contributors to the Internet governance process.

So it was with great pleasure when we put in our expression of interest to host the 6<sup>th</sup> United Nations IGF during the EA-IGF meeting held in Nairobi in 2009 and the UN accepted this proposal last year. I

look forward to welcoming participants from all over the world in September 2011.

Having participated in the fourth IGF held in Egypt in 2009 and the fifth one in Lithuania last year, I noted that the UN-IGF usually attracts over 1,500 people from different stakeholder groups. So this year we expect to welcome a similar number of people to Nairobi. To continue with the tradition of having an MP's roundtable on Internet Governance issues, an MP's round table will be held on 28<sup>th</sup> September chaired by our National Speaker. We expect participation by MP's from all over the world.

The Internet has become a very important tool in our lives. More than 20 million Kenyan's have access to mobile phones, and Internet users in general have risen to over 10.2 million according to the latest CCK statistics, with more 4 million Kenyans accessing Internet through their mobile phones. So the ongoing development and spread of the Internet and mobile phones is opening up new horizons for communication, connecting people around the world to a global network for sharing information and ideas. The Internet presents new opportunities for capturing and enhancing the benefits that communication has for us, including innovation, creativity, self-expression, collaboration, democracy, politics, among others.

However, Internet also presents challenges for example cybercrime and threats youth and children face online, which seem to get more and more complex and multifaceted. The policy challenge is to therefore ensure that while the Internet continues to evolve in such a way as to maximize the capacity to support positive development and social change, its use for negative ends is also minimized.

I am very pleased to see that some of the areas identified as critical Internet Governance issues for Kenya will be discussed today. For us, mobile Internet is an important issue as we continue to experience the impact and dramatic effects from our M-Pesa system to the simple reduction of communication costs for our citizens. So it will be interesting to understand and discuss whether there is a difference between mobile and wired Internet and what that means from a policy perspective.

Other new and emerging areas like open government and cloud computing and the policy and regulatory challenges and solutions

required to enhance investment and innovative use of the Internet.

Further, having invested heavily in ICT infrastructure to enable access to affordable Internet connections to even all-rural areas in the country, Kenya has very ambitious plans to become a highly wired nation and a knowledge economy in line with Vision 2030. In this regard, we need a national broadband policy to provide direction for this path.

So I am hoping the Kenya IGF discussions today will respond to some of these local pertinent issues. And the UN-IGF coming to Nairobi in September this year will provide a global opportunity to continue these discussions and how they affect people in developing regions of the world.

But overall, the Kenya IGF will need to consider the kind of Internet we want and I hope the discussions today will begin to draw some answers to this broad question.

I wish you fruitful deliberations.

I thank you.