

Alice Munyua

Chair, Internet Governance Steering Committee

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Hon. James Rege

Hon Philip Okundi

Dr. Bitange Ndemo

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and gentlemen

We [Kenyans] are very proud to be hosting the sixth meeting of the UN Internet Governance Forum in a few week's time – September 27-30.

This is the first time an IGF is being held in a sub Saharan African country and we welcome the development 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, and Access and diversity.

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)”. 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 sub contracting 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 as 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 IGF 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.

At the national and regional level, the first Kenya Internet Governance Forum was held in 2008 supported by government, private sector, civil society and IDRC. Kenya also organised and convened the first two regional EA-IGFs. The Uganda government hosted the 2010 EA-IG and this year we hope The Rwanda government will host the 4th EA-IGF.

These regional IGFs bring together stakeholders from Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi, South Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya to identify, explore, and build consensus around common Internet Governance priority issues.

The EA-IGF model follows a bottom up multi-stakeholder approach, which begins at the national level with mailing list discussions in the five East African countries, followed by national face-to-face IGFs to continue discussions and validate the issues identified as well as 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.

The sixth Global IGF will be held in Nairobi in September 27-30 will have main sessions discussing issues such as broadband, mobile access, the resources critical to the stable and secure operation of the internet, cyber security, privacy and internet rights, and youth and entrepreneurship among others. 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 Gigiri. All are welcome, registration is free, except we want you our local experts to participate in the main sessions and many workshops.

Kenya will also hold a high level Ministerial forum, which will bring together over 30 ministers from all over the world, high level business, technical and civil society representatives. This Ministers meeting will discuss the issues coming from the Kenya IGF and have also developed a list of other events to strengthen participation and interaction with Kenyan Internet Community.

With the ICANN meeting that took place last year, the IGF coming to Kenya in September will continue to increase Kenya's place in global Internet governance and policy processes.

Thank you