African Union Commission

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Joint AUC and ECA Communiqué on the Secretariat of the African IGF

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a platform for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue on prevailing and emerging issues on Internet governance ecosystem. The forum aims at fostering the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and the development of the Internet.

Africa's contribution to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process has led to the formation of the African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF) in September 2011. It was agreed that the Secretariat *of the AfIGF would be hosted by the United Nations Economic commission (ECA) with the full support of the African Union Commission (AUC).*

While both institutions have been working hand in hand to ensure the efficient functioning and operations of the secretariat namely, hosting the web site, organizing e-discussions and facilitating the annual meetings of the forum, the African stakeholders were sovereign in their deliberations. The AUC, the member States and the Internet community wish to acknowledge and thank ECA for the important role played in coordinating the work of the AfIGF Secretariat for the past three years.

There is, however, an emerging necessity to broaden stakeholders' representation across government, private sector, academia, technical communities, civil society and media. Furthermore, it became evident that in order to translate the recommendations of the AfIGF into concrete actions by member States and other regional stakeholders, it is necessary that diplomatic leverage be applied to the African Union political leadership and/or global decision-making bodies to further advance the African stakeholders' ambitions and aspirations. Indeed, Internet Governance has recently grown in its geopolitical and strategic importance.

The 4th ordinary session of the African Union Conference of Ministers in charge of Communication and Information Technologies (CITMC-4) held in Sudan in September 2012 requested Member States '*'to support the establishment of national IGF to create dialogue between all stakeholders on ICT for development issues and facilitate the countries' participation in the regional and African IGF processes as well as in the global IGF".*

Furthermore, in the fall of 2012, the ECA embarked on participatory reform process to ensure that it responds to the evolving needs and demands of its member states regarding economic and social development in Africa. ECA, through its strategic vision aims to strengthen the rigour and pertinence of the knowledge produced in its various work streams in order to become an authoritative source of analytical insights into African development.

It is in this context that ECA and AUC decided to move the secretariat of the AfIGF to the AUC, while it continues to provide full support to the operations of the secretariat.

AUC and ECA will continue to work collaboratively in addressing key issues relating to Africa's development trajectory, and thus, co-ordinate activities towards promoting a framework for the African Internet community aimed at strengthening a culture of knowledge transfer, exchanging views and reaching consensus on internet governance through different modes of communication.

Addis Ababa, 3 September 2014