

**Draft  
Charter of the  
African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF)**

23 August 2017

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## **The African Internet Governance Charter Working Group**

The African Internet Governance Charter was requested by the Fourth African Internet Governance Forum held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 6 to 8 September 2015. It was developed online by an AfIGF Charter Working Group, which was put in place by the African Union and composed of the following individuals:

**African IGF Secretariat:** Makane Faye, Senegal

**Chairperson:** Mary Uduma, Nigeria

**Members:**

- Olusegun H. Olugbile, Nigeria
- Ridha Guellouz, Tunisia
- Towela Nyirenda-Jere, South Africa (NEPAD Agency)
- Wisdom Donkor, Ghana

## Preliminary Notes

In the context of AfIGF,

1. The interpretation of Multi-stakeholderism is based on the meaningful and accountable participation and inclusion of all stakeholders including the following stakeholder Groups/Affiliations:
  - The governments
  - The private sector
  - The civil society
  - The Academia
  - The African regional organizations
  - The Technical community
  - Youth
2. The respective roles and responsibilities of stakeholders should be interpreted in a flexible manner with reference to the issue under discussion.
3. Participation to the AfIGF will be on individual basis while participants may identify with a stakeholder group.
4. The AfIGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group (AfIGF MAG) members are volunteers who are selected on personal grounds. However in selecting members of AfIGF MAG, every stakeholder group and African sub-regions (RECs) must be included.
5. The role of the AfIGF MAG is to assist the African Union in organizing the annual AfIGF meeting and to prepare the relevant content.
6. The link between the AfIGF and the regional IGFs is based on strong and continuous relationships between the AfIGF Secretariat and members of the AfIGF MAG who are at the same time members of their respective sub-regional IGFs.

## 2 Background

7. Building on the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals, and the mandate given at the Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis (WSIS), the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a United Nations led-activity initiated in 2006 as a global platform for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue on prevailing and emerging issues on Internet Governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability, and development of the Internet.

### IGF mandate

8. As per Paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda: “We ask the UN Secretary-General, in an open and inclusive process, to convene, by the second quarter of 2006, a meeting of the new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue—called the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). The mandate of the Forum is to:
  - Discuss public policy issues related to key elements of Internet Governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet;
  - Facilitate discourse between bodies dealing with different cross-cutting international public policies regarding the Internet and discuss issues that do not fall within the scope of any existing body;
  - Interface with appropriate inter-governmental organizations and other institutions on matters under their purview;
  - Facilitate the exchange of information and best practices, and in this regard make full use of the expertise of the academic, scientific and technical communities;
  - Advise all stakeholders in proposing ways and means to accelerate the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world;
  - Strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet governance mechanisms, particularly those from developing countries;
  - Identify emerging issues, bring them to the attention of the relevant bodies and the general public, and, where appropriate, make recommendations;
  - Contribute to capacity building for Internet governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise;
  - Promote and assess, on an ongoing basis, the embodiment of WSIS principles in Internet Governance processes;
  - Discuss, inter alia, issues relating to critical Internet resources;
  - Help to find solutions to the issues arising from the use and misuse of the Internet, of particular concern to everyday users;
  - Publish its proceedings.”

### Extension of the IGF Mandate

9. The mandate of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was put in place initially for a five years duration (2006-2010);

10. Following the first five years successful delivery of the mandate of IGF, the international community decided to extend the IGF mandate for another five years covering the period (2011-2015).
11. Recognizing that the arrangements of the first ten years of the IGF process worked effectively to make the Internet the highly robust, dynamic and geographically diverse medium that it is today, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2015 resolved to extend the IGF mandate for another 10 years with its current mandate as set out in paragraph 72 to 78 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.

### 3 The African Internet Governance Forum

12. The African Internet community contributed significantly to the WSIS process and to the implementation of its outputs, especially with regard to Internet governance, hosting two global IGFs in Egypt (2009) and Kenya (2011).
13. Responding to a strong need to support and promote the consolidation of the on-going activities related to Internet governance, in 2011, the African Internet community took the initiative of establishing the African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF).
14. Presently, there are five sub-regional IGF initiatives that are ongoing in Africa; the West Africa Internet Governance Forum (WAIGF), the East Africa Internet Governance Forum (EAIGF), Forum de Gouvernance de l'Internet en Afrique Centrale (FGI-CA), the Southern Africa Internet Governance Forum (SAIGF) and the North African Internet Governance Forum (NAIGF). In line with the UNGA 2015 decision, the African IGF activities are extended for a ten years period ending in 2026, according to the following principles, objectives, rules and procedures.

#### Fundamental principles

15. The AfIGF shall, in keeping with the global Internet Governance Forum, be:
  - **Open** - all entities, organizations and participating institutions which are Internet governance stakeholders shall be free to join the forum.
  - **Multi-stakeholder** - At all points, efforts shall be made to encourage all categories of stakeholders to actively participate in the Forum.
  - **Language Diversity** - The AfIGF, to the measure of its capacity, shall strive to maintain language diversity based on the working languages of the African Union, in its operations (given budgetary constraints at least English and French will be used).
  - **Transparent** - The stakeholders shall strive to be open in communications, in decisions and their implementations. Clear understanding of the Internet Governance process for sustainability in engagement of all stakeholders shall be the aim of the AfIGF.

#### Objectives

16. The specific objectives of the African Internet Governance Forum are:

- To raise greater awareness and support user's capabilities in the field of Internet governance to ensure good preparation for African stakeholders to contribute and interact at the global level;
- To ensure that the interests of Africa in the context of the global Internet Governance Forum and at African and international levels are well formulated, understood and taken into consideration;
- To develop coordinated regional action plan and facilitate international exchanges for Internet governance;
- To boost and facilitate the participation of the African stakeholders in specialized regional and international forums on Internet governance;
- 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<sup>1</sup>;
- To promote access to information and knowledge, content development and the use of African languages in the cyberspace; and
- To promote the use of ICTs and the Internet in the socio-economic development of the continent.

## Participation

17. AfIGF is open and free of charges to all stakeholder groups who would like to participate in its activities.

## 4 AfIGF Structures

### The AfIGF Annual Meeting

18. The AfIGF is held annually, preferably at different venue within one of the five African sub-regions, ideally on a rotational basis.

19. The AfIGF meeting is chaired by the host country supported by the Secretariat and the MAG Chairperson.

20. The AfIGF annual meetings are organized in plenary sessions and breakout sessions, depending on topics identified by the MAG (through consultation process of the stakeholders) for the particular year's Forum.

21. Side events and pre-events may be organized in the context of the annual AfIGF, in accordance with specific rules to be established by the MAG as "Side events and pre-events guidelines".

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<sup>1</sup> This was a recommendation of 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.

22. An AfIGF report will be produced at the end of the annual AfIGF meeting.
23. A summary shall be produced for each workshop, breakout and plenary session. Workshop organizers are responsible for producing their report while plenary and breakout sessions are the responsibility of the MAG.
24. The host country may organize an exhibition during the annual AfIGF meeting, in accordance with the “Side events and pre-events guidelines”.
25. The AfIGF Annual Meeting will:
- designate the Nominating Committee (NOMCOM) members during odd-year sessions.
  - announce AfIGF MAG composition during even-year sessions.

## **The Nominating Committee (NOMCOM)**

### Role and functions

26. The role of the AfIGF Nominating Committee (NOMCOM) is to appoint 10 MAG members, among candidates from all African countries for a period of two years.

### Composition of the NOMCOM

27. The AfIGF Nominating Committee is composed of the AUC, UNECA and the RECs.

## **The AfIGF Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (AfIGF MAG)**

### Roles and functions

28. The main role of the AfIGF MAG is to prepare and help with the organization of the annual meeting of the African Internet Governance Forum on the basis of the principles and rules that have been agreed in the Tunis Agenda of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in terms of participation of all stakeholders.

29. The decisions of the MAG will be made by consensus.

30. In cooperation with the AfIGF secretariat, the AfIGF MAG main functions include:

- Manage the content of the annual AfIGF by
  - determining the theme and sub-themes (after an inclusive consultation with stakeholders) and the content of the annual African IGF; and
  - developing the structure and format of the annual meeting of the Forum
- With the support of the AfIGF secretariat and in close collaboration the host country, coordinate the preparation of the annual meeting of the AfIGF.
- Report to the annual AfIGF meeting.
- In coordination with the Secretariat, the AfIGF MAG may also contribute to marketing of the annual Forum and sourcing of financial partners as contributors and sponsors.

## AFIGF MAG Composition

31. The Members of the AFIGF MAG shall be individuals from relevant African Government Institutions, African Civil Society, Academia and Technical community, African Private Sector, African based Regional and International organizations and African Youth.
32. The AFIGF MAG is composed of:
- The conveners of the five African sub-regional IGFs
  - 10 members appointed among candidates from all African countries, by the Nominating Committee (NomCom) for a mandate of two years.
  - A member designated by the Africa Union Commission
  - A member designated by UNECA.
33. Regional African organizations and Africa based international organizations may also participate in the AFIGF MAG activities.
34. The MAG shall be led by a Chairperson supported by a General Rapporteur, both of them being designated among the MAG members, taking into consideration a reasonable rotation of the responsibilities among the five African sub-regions and stakeholder categories.
35. The AFIGF MAG activities are conducted by the MAG members on a voluntary and pro-bono basis.
36. Members serve in their personal capacity but are expected to have extensive linkages with their respective stakeholder groups.

## Duration of the mandate

37. The composition of the AFIGF MAG is announced at the end of each even year of the AFIGF meeting. The duration of the MAG mandate is meant normally for two years. After the first renewal, 5 members will be eligible for another term while 5 will retire. Subsequently, the longest serving members will retire at the end of each term. The mandate ends at the announcement of the composition of the new MAG at the end of the following even year AFIGF meeting. Former MAG members are eligible for reappointment after a 2 years break.

## Organization of the MAG activities

38. To facilitate the Annual AFIGF preparation, the MAG and the AFIGF secretariat will put in place the following four (4) specialized committees:
- Program Committee
  - Fellowship & Sponsorship Committee
  - Communication and Outreach Committee
  - Exhibition Committee

39. The MAG Chairperson and the AfIGF secretariat may create other committees and working groups led by MAG and co-opting volunteers from the community. Committees and working groups would be established based on needs and according to the requirements of the annual AfIGF preparatory process. Such Committees and Working Groups are adhoc and will not become permanent.

## **The AfIGF secretariat**

### Hosting of the AfIGF Secretariat

40. The AfIGF Secretariat shall be composed of a lean secretariat with a Coordinator and a Desk Officer and seasonal volunteers including interns and fellows.

41. The African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF) Secretariat is hosted by the African Union Commission (AUC) and supported by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). It is physically located at the AUC Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

### Role of the AfIGF Secretariat

42. The secretariat will have the following responsibilities:

- Provide administrative, logistical and organisational support to the AfIGF MAG;
- Promote the AfIGF activities at global, sub-regional and national IGFs ;
- Develop strategies on sustaining the AfIGF process and secretariat in consultation with the AfIGF MAG;
- Develop TORs for hosting the AfIGF events and follow up with potential hosts; and
- Develop and maintain active e-mail lists and website and act as a knowledge management hub of the AfIGF experiences, best practices, knowledge, expertise, needs and resources among sub-regional and national IGFs.

## **Funding of AfIGF activities**

43. The African Union Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa shall provide a core budget for funding the African IGF and will seek financial and other support from their partners to contribute in the success and the sustainability of the annual AfIGF events.

44. In addition an AfIGF Support Fund will be put in place by the Secretariat to be fed by:

- Voluntary contributions of African and international organizations;
- Contributions from individuals and businesses; and
- Contributions from the AfIGF meetings host countries.

## **Adoption of the Charter**

The draft Charter was circulated to various African Internet Governance stakeholder groups in the first week of September 2017 for a 3-week comment period, which ended on 30<sup>th</sup> September 30. The revised document was sent back to stakeholders on <to be inserted> with final revisions.

The charter was adopted by the Sixth African IGF on <to be inserted>.