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**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system and elsewhere on
their efforts in 2015 to implement the outcome of the WSIS**

Submission by

African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF)

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (to the 18th session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

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DRAFT

WSIS+10 Non-Paper: Comment from African Stakeholders at the 2015 African Internet Governance Forum

Submitted by the African Internet Governance Forum Secretariat

The African Union Commission (AUC), the Association of Africa Progressive Communications (APC), the Egyptian Ministry of ICT, the Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet) and the Internet Society (ISOC), organized a pre-event on WSIS+10 on 6 September in Addis Ababa. This was immediately prior to the Africa Internet Governance Forum¹ that took place from 7-8 September 2015. At this event, after an overview of the WSIS process and the 10-year review, participants which included around 200 people from all stakeholder groups (government, civil society, business, academia, international organisations and the technical community) divided into groups that discussed the non-paper in depth.

This submission is a compilation of reactions to the non-paper that emerged from this event.

COMMENTS ON THE PREAMBLE OF THE NON-PAPER

Participants at the African IGF WSIS+10 pre-event were generally positive about the preamble and appreciate the special mention of African countries in paragraph 6. However, they felt strongly about the following:

Paragraph 1 would be strengthened by including a reference to human rights as was done in the first paragraph of the Geneva Declaration of Principles: “We, the representatives of the peoples of the world, assembled in Geneva from 10-12 December 2003 for the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, declare our common desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”²

Participants felt that paragraph 3 should recognize that the benefits of the digital economy are limited by digital exclusion; exclusion which needs to be addressed for this 'economy' to contribute to sustainable development.

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

The non-paper importantly mentions the ongoing divides within and between countries in paragraph 10, as well as the risk that these divides may grow. However, it does not point out that the digital divide is first and foremost a consequence of larger social and economic divides. Insufficient human development remains a major unsolved problem in Africa. The value of increased access to devices

1 <http://afigf.org/?q=AFIGF2015>

2 <http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html>

such as mobile phones is limited by people's lack of knowledge in how to make use of these devices, or how to access relevant content, assuming this content exists and is available in local languages. These divides (digital, and social and economic) impact on all WSIS action lines. Awareness raising, advocacy and capacity building to develop, preserve, access and use content and knowledge that can contribute to social, economic and environmental development is necessary remain vital.

Internet access and penetration is still very weak in Africa. Access for all is important, but particularly for groups at risk, such as people living with disability, or people who are already marginalised, such as women in low income groups and rural people all over the continent. There is need to promote public access facilities such as libraries throughout the world, particularly in developing countries where such services do not exist, and when they do, are lacking in resources. Libraries are spaces which can provide not only access to the internet, but also access to information and capacity building.

Meeting these challenges requires developing collaborative planning, platforms and projects at national and regional levels. Regions should be encouraged to develop integrated economic strategies and models which includes manufacturing and certification of equipment and development of applications that respond to local/regional needs.

Overall we believe that for the digital divide to be bridged in Africa, but probably also in other developing regions, there is a fundamental need for investment in human capacity development and educational and research institutions, including universities. This will help bridge the lack of relevant online content, and in research capacity. It is also necessary to invest in research and data gathering at national level to enable all stakeholders, and governments in particular, to understand and respond to the changes in the digital divide.

ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT

Participants in the African IGF propose that the heading of this section be changed to “ICT for sustainable development” in line with the already stated link between the WSIS and the post-2015 development agenda.

Points they feel should be added to the non-paper include the need for continuous research into ICT for development and the need for, as stated above in digital divide as well, continuous capacity building and training. ICT for development does not require once off investment. Investment into mobilising ICTs for development should be long term and integrated across national budgets. The non-paper should stress the need for a diverse and sustainable ICT ecosystem across all sectors (health, education, security, justice, waste etc.) and point out that this can only be achieved by integrating or mainstreaming ICTs in all development sectors with the involvement of all stakeholder groups.

Some participants felt that Universal Access Funds are still an important source of funding that can be invested in ICT for development and that contributions from industry players should be increased to support sustainable development activities. Others were concerned that increasing licensing fees or taxation could raise barriers to entry for new and local businesses.

All participants felt that regulatory hindrances need to be minimized so as not to stifle innovation. There is a need for more, and more widely distributed, innovation hubs so that people in rural areas have easier access to ICT for development tools, skills and information.

Energy and e-waste management must be tackled, and more use of renewable technologies such as solar be encouraged in all ICT expansion.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Participants felt that the non-paper does not give this important area sufficient emphasis.

They supported the non-paper's underscoring of the right to development and respect for freedom of expression and the independence of the press, taking into account the individual right to privacy, and media ethics and responsibilities. They agreed that in the context of online communications no person shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, consistent with countries obligations under international human rights law.

The felt that this section should mention that the right of freedom of expression, as described in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, is essential for media's role in information and knowledge societies, and through this, media's role in ICTs for sustainable development.

They support the non-papers reaffirmation that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online as they are enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

They felt that the non-paper should emphasize the need for the prioritization of women and girls in the areas of access, and equality online as offline, in order to achieve gender parity in all areas of engagement including in all aspects of the information society.

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Participants expressed overall support for the text of the non-paper in this section. They had some recommendations, outlined below:

They agreed that the Internet has “continued to grow in number of users, speed of access, range of services and many other ways, necessitating fast-changing and inclusive governance structure.” Nevertheless they feel the non-paper should stress that despite the above, there are still affordability challenges for developing and least developed countries. Undersea fibre capacity available at the coasts of developing countries can often not be utilised by their citizens because of poor intra and inter-national infrastructure. There is need for more Internet Exchange Points (IXP) and the presence of first tier IXPs. This requires interventions at the policy level and cooperation between all stakeholders at the level of deployment.

They felt that the definition of internet governance in paragraph 23: “There is general agreement that the governance of the Internet should be open, inclusive and transparent, within the working definition of Internet governance as 'the development and application by governments, the private sector, civil society, technical and academic community in their respective roles, of shared

principles, norms, decision-making procedures and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet', should evolve to include the governance of the Internet technical resources.

They recommend that the non-paper includes a call for sustainable capacity building for members from developing and least developed countries to encourage meaningful participation and contributions to Internet governance issues.

CYBERSPACE

Many felt that this section should be entitled "cyber security" or cyber safety.

They felt that the call in paragraph 29: "We call for increased global efforts and cooperation in combating cybercrime and countering cyber-threats" should have the following text added: "without compromise of user privacy."

Paragraph 29 would then read: "We call for increased global efforts and cooperation in combating cybercrime and countering cyber threats without compromising user privacy."

The recommend adding the following text to this section: "There is a need for special emphasis on the protection and empowerment of children online. In this regard, governments and other stakeholders should work together to help all enjoy the benefits of ICTs in a safe and secure environment."

FOLLOW UP AND REVIEW

Participants are happy with this section in general but had the following comments:

They felt that the statement in paragraph 31 on mobilising domestic public and private resources to spur ICT access and content creation should recognize the role of civil society efforts. At present it appears to only include government and business. They therefore suggest the text is modified to read: "There will be a continued focus on mobilizing domestic public and private resources and the efforts of civil society to spur ICT access and content creation."

In response to paragraph 33 on content, participants added that there is little content in African languages meaning that African cultures and identities are not represented well on the internet. There is need to make local content and local knowledge accessible in order to facilitate the ability of governments, parliamentarians, local authorities, local communities, civil society, the private sector and individuals to make informed decisions in their efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

They felt strongly that there is a need for regional follow up processes. In this regard they recommend that a new paragraph be added before or after paragraph 37 that reads: "We call for annual regional reviews of WSIS+10 outcomes, involving all stakeholders, convened by UN Regional Commissions, where member states, international and regional organizations report on progress in achieving WSIS outcomes within the context of 2030 agenda of Sustainable Development."

They also recommend that the non-paper mentions the need for the development of targets and indicators to monitor progress towards the achievement of access to information and knowledge for

the persons living with disability.

They also felt that this section should mention the need for promotion of the multistakeholder model, particularly at national levels, as an important pre-condition for effective WSIS follow up and implementation.

END