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(CSTD)**

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**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system, international  
organizations and other stakeholders on their efforts in 2020 to  
implement the outcomes of the WSIS**

**Submission by**

African Union

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 24<sup>th</sup> 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.

**DISCLAIMER:** The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

## **Implementation and follow-up of the WSIS at African Union Level**

Earlier this year, the AU Summit endorsed the Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS) for Africa 2020-2030 to spur innovation, inclusive and sustainable growth on the continent. Innovations and digitalization are stimulating job creation and contributing to addressing poverty, reducing inequality, facilitating the delivery of goods and services, and contributing to the realization of AU Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa will build on the existing initiatives and frameworks such as the Policy and Regulatory Initiative for Digital Africa (PRIDA), the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the African Union Financial Institutions (AUFIs), the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM); and the Free Movement of Persons (FMP) to support the development of a Digital Single Market (DSM) for Africa, as part of the integration priorities of the African Union. The AUC is currently developing an implementation architecture & plan and monitoring & evaluation framework for the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa 2020-2030. Against this backdrop, the AU Commission carried out a series of activities in relation to the WSIS themes and Action lines, inter alia, the following:

### **WSIS Theme - Internet Governance**

Under PRIDA Internet Governance track, during this year a toolkit was developed to assist member states in organizing national, regional and continental IGFs. As a result of Covid-19 outbreak, the team developed a practical guide for virtual organization of national, regional and continental IGFs. So far, a total of 100 African experts were capacitated as IG trainers using offline/ online Internet Governance courses. Content on IG and Cybersecurity for Diplomats is under development. A study for the sustainability of IG training at national, regional and continental level is nearing completion. This will help member states provide IG training if/when PRIDA finally expires. The team was able to develop content for national Schools on IG for Member States that do not currently have national IGF processes. This content will be delivered initially in 10 countries during 2020 where more than 500 Africans will be trained on IG. Through PRIDA, support was provided to ECOWAS region for the organization of their regional Internet Governance Forum in July of this year. Plans are underway to support other regions organize their regional Schools on IG and IGFs. The team also drafted a framework for Digital Policy Clinic to be launched under PRIDA Digital Platform. This portal will enable policy makers get the right information for their bilateral and multilateral digital policy negotiations / formulation.

### **WSIS Theme - Internet Governance Forum**

The Eight African Internet Governance Forum ([www.afigf.africa](http://www.afigf.africa)) was held from 10 to 12 September 2019 in N'Djamena, Chad under the theme "Shared Responsibilities of Stakeholders for a Robust Internet Governance Ecosystem in Africa". Over 500 participants from 35 countries drawn from government, private sector, academia, research institutions, technical community, civil society organizations, media, and other stakeholders took part in the conference. The conference was organized using plenary and parallel sessions format.

The plenary sessions were: (i) Induction for newcomers (ii) National and Regional Initiatives; (iii) Achieving Digital Inclusion in Africa (iv) Affordable & Non-discriminatory Access to the Internet in Africa; (v) Security, Safety, Stability & Resilience of cyberspace; (vi) Digital Cooperation & Future of the Internet; and (vii) Emerging Technologies for Sustainable Growth. The parallel/pre-event Sessions were: (i) The African School on IG; (ii) The African Youth IGF Session; (ii) Ruralization. The African IGF came up with key recommendations on all the above topics, including on the need to assist countries who do not have national IGF to start one, governments must address the issues of cyberbullying, calling countries to take the necessary action to ratify the AU Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection and show their solidarity towards creating global online safety, security and data protection frameworks in the context of global peace and security. The AfIGF Secretariat is hosted by the African Union Commission (AUC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Forum's website is [www.afigf.africa](http://www.afigf.africa). Coordination of the African IGF process was done through an online platform created in January 2018 specifically for this purpose which is: <https://knowledge.afigf.africa/>. The African IGF-2020, the African School on IG and the African Youth IGF will be organized virtually during the last week of November.

### **WSIS Action Lines**

**C1. ICT Policies** - The "Policy and Regulation Initiative for Digital Africa" (PRIDA) is a joint initiative of the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in cooperation with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), that enables the African continent to reap the benefits of digitalization by addressing various dimensions of broadband demand and supply in Africa and building the capacities of AU Member States in the Internet Governance and digital policy. PRIDA, started in 2018, has set out to achieve three main objectives: (i) Efficient and harmonized spectrum utilization across the continent, (ii) Harmonization of measurable ICT/Telecommunications policy, legal and regulatory frameworks and (iii) African stakeholders' active participation in the global internet governance debate. Among the priority areas for continental harmonization, two (02) topics have been selected for 2020 namely "Conditions of Entry into the Market (Authorization/Licensing Regime)" and "Protection of Personal Data and Data Location". PRIDA is being implemented through benchmarking and needs assessments, open consultations, capacity building of policymakers, regulatory agencies, technical community, private sector and civil society, through face to face meetings and the PRIDA Digital Platform.

### **C5. Building confidence and security: AU Cybersecurity activities**

The African Union Commission has been actively promoting Cybersecurity on the continent. The AU Summit recently adopted a resolution promoting cybersecurity as a flagship project of the African Union Commission. The following is a summary of the key activities undertaken by the Commission in this area:

- Since the adoption of the AU Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection in Malabo in 2014, ten Member States out of the required 15 have ratified the Malabo Convention. The AUC is undertaking steps to raise awareness and promote the ratification of the Convention e.g. the development of an explanation guide (toolkit) of the AU Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal

Data Protection and the production of a booklet for dissemination among AU Member States;

- Due to resource constraints, a comprehensive report on the status of Cybersecurity and Cybercrime trend in Africa was only published once in 2016 in collaboration with Symantec. Efforts are underway to get partners' support to produce the report in the future yearly;
- The AUC developed data protection guidelines and launched them last year during Africa Internet summit in Dakar, Senegal. The guidelines are now available in all four AU official languages;
- The Commission hosted, for the first time in Africa, the Annual Meeting of the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise (GFCE) in October 2019, which was followed by meetings of the Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace and the Chatham House. The GFCE annual meeting was concluded by AU/UN consultations on international cybersecurity matters and their impact on international peace and security within the framework of the activities of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts (UNGGE) and the United Nations Open Ended Working Group for responsible State behavior in Cyberspace (OEWG). Common African positions on peaceful use of cyberspace were communicated to the UN governmental group of experts (UNGGE) for consideration at the global level. As a result of this collaboration, the AUC and GFCE are now contemplating a cybersecurity capacity building initiative project for AU member states;
- Under the umbrella of the Policy and Regulation Initiative for Digital Africa (PRIDA), the AUC organized capacity building workshops for AU senior diplomats and mid-level representatives on Internet Governance and Cybersecurity in Washington, DC in October 2019 and in New York, in December 2019. Online training content for policy makers is under development with the support of Diplo Foundation;
- In cooperation with Internet and Jurisdiction (I&J) Network, the AUC organized workshops on cybersecurity policy and Internet Jurisdiction for the African Diplomatic community held physically in Addis Ababa in 2018 and virtually in 2020.
- An African Union Cybersecurity Expert Group (AUCSEG) has been established to advise the Commission concerning international discussions on cybersecurity and cybercrime and to exchange best practices. The group organized more than ten consultations so far and developed a strategy paper on Cybersecurity shared with participants during the last AU Summit as well as organizing three Webinars on Internet Resilience and Cybersecurity in the context of Covid-19. These Webinars attended by an average of 150 participants per each and key topics included 1. National cyber-security strategy pillars 2. Importance of ratifying Malabo Convention 3. Pillars of Internet Resilience in Africa during outbreaks and natural disasters;
- A network of National Data Protection agencies has been setup and a portal for information / best practices sharing is currently under development.