THE EAST AFRICAN INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM 2023

1.0 BACKGROUND

Enabling the meaningful participation of developing nation partners in global Internet policy development has long been identified as an important priority in achieving an equitable and accessible Information Society. The East African Internet Governance Forum (EAIGF) is part of the global Internet Governance Forum. As it will be recalled, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was created at the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to provide an environment to continue dialogue on Internet public policy issues with the goal of ensuring the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet.

Now in its eighteenth year, the IGF has continued to be an important global arena for international multi-stakeholder dialogue about policy issues affecting the Internet's management, development and deployment. The IGF process to date has addressed development and capacity building as cross cutting topics and overarching priorities; however, issues surrounding Internet Governance have not fully caught the attention of policy makers and other stakeholders in developing countries especially Africa. Further, enabling participation of stakeholders from developing countries in the IGF process has been challenging. With limited knowledge of the issues and discussion, developing countries are often underrepresented in the global arenas where these Internet policies are developed, and unable to meaningfully contribute to the dialogue at the Internet Governance Forum.

2.0 GOALS OF THE EAIGF
The East African-Internet Governance Forum (EAIGF) forum aims at creating a Community of Practice that will build a sustaining foundation for meaningful participation of East African stakeholders in Internet public policy debates at the national, regional and international level. The EAIGF model allows for the informed participation, contribution and engagement of community members through the sharing of experiences and skills, solving common problems and challenges, the creation of new knowledge and increasing local capacity and talent in Internet Governance issues. The EAIGF follows a bottom up multi-stakeholder approach, which begins at the national level with mailing list discussions in the six   East African countries moderated by national animators, followed by national face-to-face IGFs; to continue discussions and debate, which go further to validate the issues identified and begin to explore recommendations and solutions. The national IGFs then form the building block for the regional EAIGF.

Following the success of the meetings held in 2008 - 2022 the value of continued dialogue on Internet Governance issues and the lessons learnt, the process has created momentum and desire for continuation and expansion in 2023 and beyond. Accordingly, partners in the EAIGF will continue to hold IGF processes and fora   at national and regional level, with the following goals:

● Establish which Internet Governance issues are relevant to the countries of the region by mapping out lessons learnt from the region
● Build consensus on   national and regional positions around relevant Internet Governance issues
● Raise awareness of Internet Governance (IG) among policy makers and stakeholders in the East African Region
● Share the outcomes of the regional forum with other regions

Main Objective of the EAIGF
The EAIGF is a platform for an inclusive multilateral, multi-stakeholder and multilingual discussion on issues pertinent to enhancing Internet development in East Africa and Internet Governance issues.
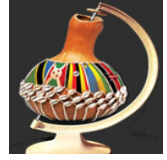
Specific objectives include:

- To increase awareness and build capacity on Information Society and Knowledge Management issues for East African Internet users, to ensure that all stakeholders are well prepared for contribution and interaction.
- To ensure that the concerns of East African citizens are considered in the Regional and global IGF process.
- To put in place a coordinated process in East Africa for dealing with Information Society and Knowledge Management issues in the sub region.
- To strengthen the multi-stakeholder dialogue model for Information Society and Knowledge Management in East Africa through the regional and national fora   .
- To ensure a multi-stakeholder representation in National and the Regional Forum in East Africa.
- To ensure that all the countries are part of the sub regional processes and to strengthen their national processes.
- To facilitate national and sub regional exchanges and interactions between countries and in the Sub Region.
- To facilitate follow up of EAIGF decisions and recommendations in appropriate regional and global fora.
- To promote use of local content in East Africa and knowledge in cyberspace.

PRIORITY THEMES/ISSUES OF FOCUS FOR EAIGF 2023
The following themes/issues have been selected to be the focus for this year's EAIGF.

- AI & Emerging Technologies,
- Avoiding Internet Fragmentation
- Cybersecurity, Cybercrime & Online safety,
- Data Governance & Trust
- Digital Divides & Inclusion
- Human Rights & Freedoms

Sponsorship Opportunities.

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