



EAST AFRICA INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM REPORT 2022

The East Africa Internet Governance Forum was held on place **November 10 – 11, 2022**, in Arusha, Tanzania at the East Africa Community headquarters under the theme **“A Resilient Internet for Shared Common Knowledge in East Africa.”** The forum attracted six (06) sessions under with over 100 participants representing all stakeholders. Main forum programme can be accessed [here](#). Subthemes included: Access and inclusion in East Africa; *Role of Policy makers in advancing internet development in East Africa*; Cyber security policy needs for East Africa; *Building an inclusive digital economy in EA*.

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.

The year forum was hosted by the East Africa Community (EAC) in partnership with the Internet Society Tanzania Chapter with support from the Internet Society Foundation, AFRINIC, Association for Progressive Communications (APC), Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and the African Union (AU).

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

OPENING CEREMONY:

Ms. Anja Gengo, NRI Initiative Coordinator, UN IGF, emphasised the Importance of multistakeholder approach in organizing IGFs emphasizing the need to focus on involving with more parliamentarians and youth in IG processes. She urged participants to take active participation in the 17th IGF and 2022 Global youth summit taking place 28th of November, 2022 as a pre-event to the 17th IGF ins Addis Ababa.

“Many members of parliaments joining us from around the world to discuss matters related to safety online but we must also think about tomorrow for sustainability of our practices and youth are a key as there upcoming generation of experts and leaders,” Ms. Anja Gengo

Eng. Steven D. M. Mlote, the deputy secretary general East African Community Planning, Infrastructure, Finance and Administration highlighted that the EAC has continued to work with the partner states to promote the establishment of communication infrastructure and services as well as standardization of Technologies and services in the region. He shared that EAC has worked closely with the partner states in the development of national ICT policies and efforts on going towards the harmonization of ICT policies laws and regulations among the EAC partner States. Further the

region has also continued promote ICT as a priority investment sector ladies and gentlemen the EAC Vision 2050 focuses on initiatives that will transform the East African Community into an upper middle income region within a secure and a political United East African based on the principles of inclusiveness and accountability by the year 2050. The vision has set a target of attaining 95 percent



penetration of internet and the mobile networks in the region and the 67 percent of individual individuals in East Africa using the internet by the year 2050. I believe with this forum today we have inched one step closer to realizing this vision to reach these targets the ESC has set out to build and and Implement ICT development programs that are consistent with the national Regional and international aspirations and the commitments.

These programs will thus seek to attain universal access to communication infrastructure and services, ensure availability of rich and diverse ICT content and applications and build the competence confidence and Security in the Information Society. Therefore, the EAC will work towards reducing the cost and increasing the robustness of cross-border communications narrowing the Divide digital and expanding digital connectivity across the region.

“we should therefore critically look into the internet governance issues relevant to our region and put in place a coordinated process to address issues concerning the Information Society and Knowledge Management in our region,” Eng. Steven. D.M. Molte.

He further urged participants to devise strategies to enhance awareness and build capacity of Internet governance among policy makers and the stakeholders in the region while directing efforts towards promoting the use of local content and the knowledge in the region. He called upon partner states to build the consensus and establish a regional position around the internet governance issues

Honorable John V.K Mongella, Regional Commissioner, President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Governments, The United Republic of Tanzania, stressed the need to invest in technical expertise among policy makers. He added that affordable access to the internet remains a challenge as a gender gap in connectivity continues to widen women are also drastically underrepresented in information and communication technology jobs, top management and academic careers in technological sectors, calling for more action needed to address the gender gap.

“this forum therefore allows key stakeholders to actively engage and devise ways and means in which we can all shape the internet governance agenda ICT Technologies and applications such as e-government, e-commerce, e-education, e-health, environment are seen as enablers for development they provide an efficient channel to deliver a wide range of basic services in remote and rural areas. ICT applications can facilitate the achievement of Millennium development targets reducing poverty and improving health and environmental condition developing countries.” Hon. Mongella

Hon. Mongella further called for availability and accessibility of locally relevant content applications in socio-economic development programs such as software or computerized systems that present end user Solutions. According to him, this can be a significant aspect to further encourage new users of ICT but regardless of the content application or service is available in local languages.



He concluded by urging participants to build the forum into a platform where all stakeholder in the region come together to share policy expertise debate emerging technology issues, and take these ideas back to appropriate norm setting; using the forum to develop advocacy plan to improve accessibility and affordability of the internet in the east African region; and to continue identifying topics for research and further share the understanding in ICT policing internet.

Highlights from national IGFs.

- Importance of the involving young people in IG discussions by building their capacity especially in emerging technologies
- Call for focus on national wide capacity building to empower communities understand the ICT industry
- Need to strengthen the national secretariates to broaden the objective of the forums and fast track the implementation of IGF resolution and outcomes.

SESSION TWO: BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE DIGITAL ECONOMY IN EA

Session focused on exploring ways of realizing digital inclusion in the regions. Key questions included:- What is the current state of the digital economy in East Africa? Which systems are or can be put in place to enable an inclusive digital economy in East Africa? What hinderance are the current limitations in the realisation of more usage and participation, access and trust in the digital economy? What policy measures do we need to undertake to achieve a sustainable digital economy in East Africa?

Session Highlights:

The domain name system is crucial for communication and inclusion in Africa. With the support of the Latin generation script panel, we can now use domain names in local languages. However, the issue of universal acceptance remains, as some systems may not be equipped to receive emails with non-Latin script domain names. The community is working towards making the system universally accepted.

In Africa, mobile technologies and financial inclusion are crucial for access and inclusivity. However, policies adopted have often been inappropriate for the region. Many countries only have two or three telecom operators, with Ethiopia recently opening up the market to other players. Big telecoms are protected by foreign laws and regulations in the country.

Telcom operators provide most solutions for our people, beyond just connectivity. Innovators and smaller players often struggle to access these systems due to regulation and competition. Policy makers should investigate opening up the market to bring new players and solutions that are practical and close to the challenges faced by our people. The digital economy in Tanzania could benefit from this approach.



Policy makers must address challenges in digital inclusion and economy, including limited access due to high costs of connectivity and devices, lack of digital skills and expertise, and poor coordination and harmonization of digital ecosystems leading to duplication of efforts and reduced quality of service. Thus, to the need for policy solutions to address these issues, particularly in the East African region.

Need to discuss inclusion at a sector level, such as the media sector. The government, media sector, and CSO community are crucial players in digital transformation.

SESSION THREE: ROLE OF POLICY MAKERS IN ADVANCING INTERNET DEVELOPMENT IN EAST AFRICA

Session explored key developments in the digital policy ways of measuring success in policy implementation in the region.

Session Highlights:

- The East African Community must harmonize policies and approaches to improve connectivity in the region. This has to be done while ensuring involvement and engagement with all stakeholders especially the youth in policy making process.
- Call for proper implementation of current digital policies and continuous review of policies to ensure they match with technological trends.

“As a region, it is very important that we have a harmonized policy and should ensure that there is inclusion, awareness, and capacity building. We should also think about how we can directly include the less fortunate while making these policies. Furthermore, people need to be taught how the internet can have positive and negative impacts on them,” Dr. Margaret Nyambura.

- Creating local alternatives to popular platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook can benefit from the large African population.

SESSION FOUR: ACCESS AND INCLUSION IN EAST AFRICA

Access and inclusion are among the cornerstones of the internet. However, through various forms of exclusion from the internet remains inaccessible for millions in East Africa. This session sought to understand how to address access and inclusion gaps in the region. Key questions included:- What are some of the prevailing concerns on access and inclusion in East Africa? What efforts are different actors doing to address or advocate for increased access and inclusion? How can we embrace emerging technologies such as AI, blockchain, metaverse etc without playing catchup? or should we define an internet that resonates with the realities of our developing countries?

Session Highlights



- While there have been strides made in the past 30 years, access to connectivity remains a challenge. The main issue is extending broadband to the last mile, especially in rural areas and metro cities like Darussalam. The deployment of fixed broadband is hindered by challenges like right of way access, slowing down development of metro fiber. Wireless broadband and mobile networks provide some connectivity but can also be poor. Resolving these challenges will require engagement with stakeholders to improve infrastructure.
- The issue of Spectrum in East Africa remains a challenge for deploying Broadband Wireless. Other countries in the region have resolved this, but landlocked countries struggle with backhauling. Tanzania has been increasing fiber deployment to interconnect neighboring countries, but more needs to be done to provide access to end-users. Engagements with stakeholders will help resolve these issues.
- When discussing access, it is similar to people with smartphones being connected to the internet and accessing information immediately. For example, in a room with no Wi-Fi, people may leave to find a network. In academia, there may be security issues with misinformation, so a solution is needed. A prototype was designed to check temperature and heartbeat without being falsely diagnosed with a fever. In East Africa, hybrid teaching and online research are common practices. Outreach to citizens is also important for teaching skills and accessing government services. Inclusion for people with disabilities needs to be addressed, such as creating a way to read stairs. Finally, in research, it is crucial to consider the needs of those in agriculture who may not have access to certain services.
- New technologies will continue to emerge, but what interests me is how they are being used in the lives of citizens and clients. We must identify the use cases and problems they solve. AI and the metaverse are current areas of application. Our region is involved in producing and utilizing new technologies. Skilled individuals are in high demand, specifically in data science and data engineering. Partnerships with universities such as Carnegie Mellon and the Africa Mathematics Institute are providing training for younger generations. We must invest in resources such as GPUs and high-end computing servers to stay ahead. Rather than play catch-up, we should work to set up locally and be skilled to ride the wave.
- Digital skills to access the internet and operate technology are lacking due to digital illiteracy in countries like South Sudan. This affects the private sector's growth and adaptation to new technologies. In response, a stakeholder approach is needed, starting with households teaching and encouraging access to the internet and technology.
- There's need to connect all individuals to digital trade routes in East Africa, including rural areas. This will require removing hindrances such as right-of-way charges and creating policies that enable connectivity to these areas while leveraging on existing government investments and private sector involvement.
- Call to train people to participate in the digital economy and enable them to uplift their analogue practices. Both the private sector, academia, partnerships, and governments have a



role to play in ensuring a digital economy that benefits all actors, including small farmers and software developers.

- Community networks can bridge the digital divide. This can be achieved by network operators partnering with communities who understand the different challenges. Big operators supporting community networks is a win-win for everyone thus connecting people to digital opportunities. Community Network Innovation Hubs are key to bridging the gap access and creating meaningful connections.
- Call to remove bottlenecks in policy to allow for infrastructure deployment and digital literacy to keep up with user demand. Stakeholders need to work with regulators and universal access funds to achieve non-business viable objectives.

SESSION FIVE: CYBER SECURITY POLICY NEEDS FOR EAST AFRICA

This session sought to explore the East African cyber-security landscape through a policy lens by looking at prevailing cybercrime crime concerns, challenges and opportunities in addressing them as on cybercrime in general in addition to state jurisdiction. Further, it also explored how different countries are adopting and implementing cyber security interventions and how this affects potential collaborative efforts such as cross-border data transfer, data privacy concerns and the online fraud especially as we pursue greater digitalisation? the seeing will also discuss different investments respective countries are pursuing to finance their cyber security interventions.

Session Highlights

- National infrastructure protection programs are important, as well as cooperation and coordination at both national and regional levels. Cybersecurity is a subset of national security, and a multi-stakeholder approach is necessary. Funding and sustainment of projects should be considered, both internally and externally. Non-state actors should adhere to standards and participate with the state to achieve objectives.
- At the national level, governments should prioritize cyber security and have a national strategy that includes policies, legislation, and regulations. This strategy should also address awareness, skills development, and innovation. Developing cyber emergency response teams (CERTs) is important to protect infrastructure and ensure services to citizens. A resilient infrastructure is necessary to support digital transactions and services.
- In the telecom sector, private companies should be involved in discussions on cybersecurity to implement proper platforms and ensure compliance. Citizens also have a responsibility to be aware of their own vulnerability and to be responsible in their use of devices and sharing information. Regional dynamics, such as in the East African Community and other African economic communities, are important for building cyber capacity, but challenges such as differing speeds of conformity within countries must be addressed. Regional cybersecurity centers must be prescriptive to avoid jeopardizing the sovereignty of other countries' data.



These dynamics provide opportunities for enhancing understanding and managing cybersecurity.

- Let's focus on turning cyber security into a profitable business in Africa, rather than just a problem. We need to build capacity in educational institutions to develop skills in antivirus coding and system installation. Cybersecurity can provide opportunities for revenue and innovation, as seen in the success of mobile money in Africa. Cyber diplomacy is also an important career area that requires expertise. The Global Forum for Cyber Expertise (GFCE) has collaborations with African countries to enhance cyber security capacity building through sustainability strategy, knowledge modules, and the Africa cyber expert community. These initiatives aim to bridge knowledge gaps and avoid mistakes, thus reducing costs in the long term.

“Most nations in Africa have the first level of security, so when these strategies are created, they should address the issues dealing with providing awareness, skills, and knowledge to its people. One of the fields that requires a lot of experts in Africa is the Cyber security field, therefore we should start training young minds on how to benefit from the issues brought by cybersecurity,” Dr. Martin Kayobe, Senior Project manager AUC-GFCE

- Many countries have cyber laws for crime, data protection and e-transaction. These laws reference the Malabo convention, which aims to convince more countries to adopt these laws. However, there is a need to also focus on the opportunities provided by the cyberspace, as opposed to just negativity. Sessions should be arranged to encourage youths to invest and protect themselves in cyberspace. There is also a need for awareness creation on these laws and policies. Innovation should also be encouraged. More engagement is necessary.
- There is a communication issue regarding investing in cyber security, as technical terms are not understood by those making budgetary decisions. The language barrier must be resolved by explaining the benefits and risks of cyber security to leadership, increasing knowledge on both sides. Fundraising should also be planned in advance, with clear strategic objectives for investment. Localization of cyber security solutions could benefit the digital economy, but more discussion is needed.

“When it comes to cyber security issues it is more of a reactive than a proactive issue. Researches show that there has been an increase of 6% in cybercrimes in the world. It’s also important that we understand the opportunities that come with this through entrepreneurship or innovations.” Emmanuel Chagara, CEO, Milima Security.



EAC to Enhance Information and Communication Technologies in the Region
<https://regionweek.com/eac-to-enhance-ict-in-the-region/>

Watch forum recap:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxZ98O5eh1I&t=3111s>,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxkTIHjd1Cg>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXOJNI15TnU&t=55s>

Full Forum programme: <https://eaigf2022.sched.com>