

The African Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Ministers

Africa's Common Position on Internet Governance The Dakar Resolution

We, the African Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Ministers, gathered to consider "Africa's Common Position on Internet Governance", in Dakar from 5 to 6 September 2005, thank His Excellency Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, for taking the initiative to organise this conference which has given us the opportunity to debate on building a fairer new world to improve people's lives and eradicate poverty through the creation of opportunities to generate, use and share knowledge,

Considering:

- The Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS),
- The Accra Declaration for the Tunis phase of WSIS, 2005
- The African Regional Plan of Action for Economy and Knowledge (ARAPKE), initiated by the Bamako office of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA),
- The Arab Plan of Action for the Information Society, 2005
- The African Partnership framework for Infrastructure Development
- The Arab and African Joint Communiqué adopted in Cairo in May 2005,
- The Recommendations of the Bamako Conference on «Multilingualism for cultural diversity and the involvement of all in cyberspace»,
- The Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) report,

Considering that the Information Society would accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular for the developing countries.

Considering that Internet Governance should be accountable, democratic and participatory;

Given the general principles that should guarantee

- A stable and secure functioning of the Internet; and
- The open and decentralized nature of its architecture;

Noting with satisfaction that the conclusions of WGIG reflect the concerns Africa expressed during the Accra Regional Conference (security, cultural and linguistic diversity, access, etc.);

Recognising the need to reinforce the participation and association of developing countries effectively in the process of Internet governance;

Convinced that, to arrive at practical solutions for the respective problems raised by Internet Governance, Africa should stand as one bloc at PrepCom3 and the second session of WSIS in Tunis 2005 and speak with one voice based on our interests;

Convinced that the achievement of our priorities is an ongoing process requiring broad-based consensus among the international community on Internet Governance mechanisms associating States, civil society, the Private Sector, and international agencies;

Considering that the creation of a World Internet Council (WIC), which reflects the recommendations of Chapter 48 of the Geneva Plan of Action and constitutes the final step that needs to be attained, can not be achieved immediately and necessitate the establishment of several different mechanisms;

The Conference adopts, as follows:

1. The establishment of a global consultation framework to review in depth the general policies on Internet Governance. Such a framework should authorise equal participation for all stakeholders (Government, the private sector, civil society, and international organisations).
2. The expansion and reinforcement of the existing institutions for Internet Governance to enable all stakeholders to participate and ensure Internet Governance is efficient, accountable, and democratic, and that Internet services and resources are distributed in an equitable manner among all actors and all continents.

The Conference also recommends:

1. Reinforcement of the role of the Government Advisory Committee (GAC) of Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) in all Internet Public policy development issues;
2. Internationalisation of root sever management;
3. African Member States should set up root server instances to facilitate access;
4. Setting up of a regional high speed Internet backbone allowing the creation of national, sub regional and regional Internet exchange points
5. Participation of specialized African institutions in technical Internet Governance bodies;

6. Reinforcement of the Internet Resource Management Institution, African Network Information Centre (AFRINIC), to guarantee the region's independence in Internet resources;
7. Establishment in Africa of a reference framework for building a multi-stakeholder partnership at the national, regional and continental level, based on the basic principles of digital solidarity and in conformity with the spirit and provisions of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD);
8. Contribution of African countries to the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) and utilisation of the Fund for building capacity, in particular for women and young people, and financing Internet-related projects in Africa;
9. Implementation of programmes that guarantee the presence of African languages on the Internet and use of free and open source software in order to fight against the linguistic digital divide and ensure the participation of all in the emerging new society;
10. The creation, in each African Member State, of a national structure responsible for the promotion and development of the Information Society, of knowledge sharing and the coordination of these structures at continental level;
11. The creation of Centres of Excellence around Africa for capacity development.

Dakar, 7 September 2005

MEETING OF AFRICAN ICT MINISTERS
Dakar, 5-6-7 September 2005

REPORT

Within the framework of the preparation of Africa's participation to the second phase of the World Summit of Information Society (WSIS), the meeting of African ICT Ministers took place in Dakar on 5, 6 and 7 September 2005, on the theme «Africa's Common Position on Internet Governance», at the invitation of His Excellency Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, in his capacity as Coordinator of NEPAD's ICT component. The purpose of the meeting was to define a common African position on Internet Governance.

1. Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony, presided over by His Excellency Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal registered two presentations, one by the Ghanaian Minister of Communications and another by His Excellency, President Abdoulaye Wade.

After welcoming the African Ministers attending the meeting, the Senegalese Head of State urged them to adopt a common position on Internet Governance which reflects African countries' interests, during the second phase of the World Summit on Information Society.

Earlier on, the Ghanaian Minister of Communications made an appraisal of the work of the African committee in charge of following up the World Summit on Information Society, before stating appreciation for the accomplishments registered, the most significant of which is the creation of the Digital Solidarity Fund.

2. Election of the Bureau

The Conference elected the following Bureau:

Chair: Senegal

Moderator: Ghana

Rapporteurs: Angola, Mali, Kenya, Tunisia

3. The adoption of the agenda

4. Presentations

4.1 The challenges of Internet Governance

The Internet Governance issue within the summit preparation process was presented. It was observed that consensus was not reached on problems related to Internet Governance during the first phase of the WSIS, held in Geneva. This led to the setting up of the Working Group on Internet Governance, at the request of Heads of State and Government.

4.2 The African initiatives on Internet Governance

An overview of Internet governance enabled us to discover the existence of several regional and sub-regional organisations (Afrinic, AFriPKI, AFriSPA, AFTLD, AAULL, Afrilang,

etc.). The efforts deployed by international organisations, particularly the Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie, to support capacity building and African experts' participation in international discussion forums on Internet Governance with a view to defending Africa's interests, were highlighted.

4.3 Presentation by AfriNIC

The African Regional Internet Registry became operational in April 2005. Its mode of functioning and organisation were the object of an in-depth presentation. AfriNIC host countries are Mauritius for the administrative centre, South Africa for the technical centre, Egypt for the technical backup centre and Senegal and Ghana for training.

4.4 Report of the working group on Internet Governance

This presentation was focussed on the situation, problems and working methodology of the WGIG. The key elements of the report were presented at length. They include:

- the definition of Internet governance
- the different models of organisation proposed for an efficient, democratic and multilateral management of the Internet, involving all stakeholders (government, private sector, civil society and international organisations)

4.5 African online debate on Internet Governance

The debate was launched by UNECA on 7 May 2005 at the request of the African Ministerial Committee for ICTs. The proposals that came out of the discussions go along the same ones that came out of the Accra commitments.

5. General Discussions

The following proposals came out of the discussions:

- Internet Governance must be multilateral, transparent and democratic with the involvement of the various stakeholders (governments, private sector, civil society and international organizations)
- Multilingualism
- The reinforcement of the digital solidarity fund
- Universal access to Internet infrastructure
- Countries should take back the management of their country code top level domain names (ccTLD)
- The setting up of a high speed regional African Internet backbone
- The presence of a root server in Africa
- The sharing of connectivity costs at the international level
- The setting up of Internet exchange points (IXP) at national, sub regional and regional
- Generic domain names are universal resources whose proceeds should be divided between all nations
- The reinforcement of the African organizations related to the Internet – AfriNIC, AfTLD, etc.
- The increase of diversity of the sub regional representation in AfriNIC
- The implementation of internationalized domain names (IDN)

- Building capacities in the technical and political aspects of Internet Governance at all levels
- The use of the Digital Solidarity Fund for capacity building and the financing of projects at all levels
- To set up of a network of African experts in the field of Internet governance to follow and defend the interests of Africa
- Better coordination between the Ministerial Committee and the network of African experts
- To increase governmental presence in the institutions related to Internet governance
- To set up a structure to manage the questions of Internet governance at the national and regional levels
- Call to an increased co-operation and help for countries in post-conflict situations
- The search for a consensus on Internet governance at international level
- To set up a world Council/Forum for Internet Governance
- To create frameworks of multistakeholder partnerships at national level consisting of public private partnerships, and including civil society
- A better implication of African governments at the GAC and ICANN through an increased participation
- To bridge the gender gap in ICTs
- To promote Young people use and involvement in ICTs
- The set up or reinforcement of national and regulatory ICT frameworks

6. Recommendations

12. Reinforcement of the role of the Government Advisory Committee (GAC) of Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) in all Internet Public policy development issues;
13. Internationalisation of root sever management;
14. African Member States should set up root server instances to facilitate access;
15. Setting up of a regional high speed Internet backbone allowing the creation of national, sub regional and regional Internet exchange points
16. Participation of specialized African institutions in technical Internet Governance bodies;
17. Reinforcement of the Internet Resource Management Institution, African Network Information Centre (AFRINIC), to guarantee the region's independence in Internet resources;
18. Establishment in Africa of a reference framework for building a multi-stakeholder partnership at the national, regional and continental level, based on the basic principles of digital solidarity and in conformity with the spirit and provisions of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD);
19. Contribution of African countries to the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) and utilisation of the Fund for building capacity, in particular for women and young people, and financing Internet-related projects in Africa;

20. Implementation of programmes that guarantee the presence of African languages on the Internet and use of free and open source software in order to fight against the linguistic digital divide and ensure the participation of all in the emerging new society;
21. The creation, in each African Member State, of a national structure responsible for the promotion and development of the Information Society, of knowledge sharing and the coordination of these structures at continental level;
22. The creation of Centres of Excellence around Africa for capacity development.

Dakar 5-6-7 September 2005

Country

- Angola
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cape Verde
- Egypt
- Gabon
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea Bissau
- Kenya
- Malawi
- Mali
- Morocco
- Madagascar
- Mauritania
- Niger
- RCA
- Senegal
- Chad
- Tunisia
- Zambia

Institutions

- African Union
- INTIF / Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie
- ECA
- UN/WGIG
- UNESCO
- African Academy of Languages (Acalan) Mali
- ATU
- AfriNIC
- DSF
- AfrICANN
- ISOC Senegal
- UNDP Senegal
- SONATEL
- ART
- La Poste
- The Regional Council of Dakar
- DFI Senegal
- University Cheick Anta Diop
- District of Cambérène
- District of Hann Bel Air
- District of Yoff
- CRESP

- ADIE
- AUF
- OPTIC
- Association of Senegalese Mayors
- Consumers Association of Senegal