

AfICTA - WSIS+20 Session

Titled:

Africa ICT Future: The Role of Multi-Stakeholder Engagement Beyond WSIS+20

Moderated by:

Dr. Jimson Olufuye, the CEO, Kontemporary Konsulting Ltd., Founder/fmr Chair, and Chair, Advisory Council, AfICTA

Dated:

Thursday, July 10
09:00 – 09:45 (Geneva)

Venue:

Palexpo, (Room F) Geneva & Online

Report By

AfICTA Secretariat
10 July, 2025

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2. Academia: Prof Paul Jemitola, Retired Air Vice Marshal, and Aero Space Engineer & Technology Leader for his intervention. Nigeria.- Virtual
3. Private sector: Engr Christiana Onoja, CEO, SheCode.ai., Nigeria - Onsite
4. Government: Dr Mactar Seck, Chief of Section, Innovation & Technology, UNECA represented by Ms Farah Farook. - Onsite
5. Civil Society: Ms Baratang Miya, Founder, GirlHype, South Africa - Onsite
6. Academia: Prof Abayomi Jegede, Prof. of Computer Science & IT, Edo State University, Uzairue, Edo state, Nigeria - Virtual
7. Technical: Ms Debora Comparin - Technical Director, Secure Identity Alliance. Onsite
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9. Government: Dr Kossi Amesinou, Head, Private Sector Monitoring & Support Services, Benin Republic - Virtual
10. Technical: Engr Kunle Olorundare, President, ISOC Nigeria Chapter. - Virtual
11. Government: Dr Jamal Tonzua, Deputy DG, Cybersecurity Authority of Ghana. - Onsite
12. Government: Ms. Olatokunboh Oyeleye, Director, Digital Economy, Nigeria Communication Commission - Onsite



WSIS+20
HIGH-LEVEL EVENT
7 — 11 July 2025

Session Title:

Shaping Africa's ICT Future: The Role of Multi-Stakeholder Engagement Beyond WSIS +20

Palexpo, (Room F) Geneva & Online

Thursday, July 10 by 09:00 – 09:45 (Geneva)
7:00 (UTC) | 8:00 WAT | 9:00 Jo'burg

Speakers:



Ms. Ulandi Exner

Chairperson, AfICTA-Africa ICT Alliance, South Africa



Prof. Paul O. Jemitola

Air Vice Marshal (rtd), Aerospace Engineer & Technology Leader



Ms. Olatokunbo Oyeleye

Head, Digital Economy Dept. Nigerian Communications Commission - NCC

Moderator:

Dr. Jimson Olufuye

CEO, Kontemporary Consulting Ltd., Founder/fmr Chair, and Chair of the Advisory Council, AfICTA, Africa



Engr. Kunle Olorundare

President, CEO, Internet Society Nigeria Chapter



Ms. Debora Comparin

Technical Director of the Secure Identity Alliance, Europe



Dr. Jamal Tonzua

The Deputy Director-General, Cyber - Security Authority of Ghana



Engr. Christiana Onoja

CEO, SheCode ai & Founder/ED Partnership for African Women Advancement (PAWA) Initiative



Prof. Abayomi Jegede

Professor of Computer Science & Information Technology University, Uzairue, Edo State



Mr. Wisdom Donkor

CEO, GH, Ghana Domain Name Registry



Dr. Kossi Amessinou

Head, Private Sector Monitoring & Support Service Ministry, Economy & Finances, Benin Republic



Dr. Mactar Seck

Head of the Innovation and Technology Section UNECA



Ms. Baratang Miya

Founder of Girlhype



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Session Summary:

The session was moderated by **Dr. Jimson Olufuye**, the CEO, Kontemporary Konsulting Ltd., Founder/fmr Chair, and Chair, Advisory Council, AfICTA, who began by welcoming participants and introducing the theme, *Africa's ICT Future: The Role of Multistakeholder Engagement Beyond WSIS+20*. He provided context on the urgency of Africa's digital transformation, pointing to key statistics that reveal the continent's significant digital gap. Africa, he noted, has the lowest internet penetration among the six inhabited continents standing at 39% compared to the global average of 60%. It also holds the weakest cybersecurity maturity at 29.1% (UNECA) and hosts <1% of global data centers, despite constituting 19% of the global population. Dr. Olufuye emphasized that these figures call for urgent, inclusive, and well-coordinated multistakeholder engagement, in line with the Sao Paulo multistakeholder guidelines. He introduced AfICTA (Africa ICT Alliance), an organization he founded in 2012 with 6 member nations and now operates in 43 African countries and stressed that AfICTA's vision aligns with the WSIS goal of a people-centered, inclusive, and development-oriented information society.

The welcome speech was delivered by **Ms. Ulandi Exner**, Chair of AfICTA - Africa ICT Alliance, who reaffirmed AfICTA's commitment to the WSIS framework and multistakeholderism. She elaborated on how AfICTA was born as a practical continental response to the WSIS call for inclusive and regional ICT development. She revisited the

WSIS history Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005 highlighting its outcomes such as the Geneva Plan of Action and Tunis Agenda. These called for regional cooperation, inclusive governance, capacity building, and digital infrastructure development. Ms. Exner explained how AfICTA reflects these principles through national-level engagement in over 40 countries, policy advocacy, digital innovation, and knowledge-sharing platforms such as summits and webinars. She emphasized the need for Africa to move beyond talkshops into tangible action, insisting that private sector-led multistakeholder efforts are key to shaping digital transformation. Her vision for AfICTA includes reaching all African countries by 2030 to amplify the voice of the private sector in ICT.

Speakers' Interventions

1. **Prof. Paul O. Jemitola**, Air Vice Marshal (rtd), Aerospace Engineer and Technology Leader, the first panelist, took the floor, focusing on the government's role in creating an enabling environment for ICT development through sound policies and infrastructure. He noted that although governments play a central role, all stakeholders including civil society and the private sector must collaborate for meaningful progress. He referenced WSIS Action Line 1 and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), stressing that ICT development must be built on consensus and inclusive dialogue. Prof. Jemitola emphasized that access to information is a fundamental human right and is critical for societal participation and development. He addressed the importance of cybersecurity, noting that a trustworthy digital ecosystem is essential for the widespread adoption of ICT. He also highlighted ethical considerations in the digital age, including data privacy, intellectual property rights, and accountability. These, he said, are critical if Africa is to meet the ambitions of Agenda 2063, particularly with regard to cybersecurity cooperation, digital financial institutions, and a pan-African digital network.

2. In the absence of **Dr. Maktar Seck**, Head of the Innovation and Technology Section UN Economic Commission for Africa - UNECA, **Ms Farah Farook** delivered a message on his behalf. She explained that as Chief of Technology and Innovation at UNECA, Dr. Seck deeply values multi-stakeholder engagement. UNECA's work often begins with governments but actively involves academia, the private sector including MSMEs and multinational corporations like Google and Microsoft and civil society. Ms. Farook emphasized that ICT is a critical enabler of broader development objectives and should not be viewed in isolation. It is essential for accelerating progress on the SDGs, the African Union Agenda 2063, and other priority areas such as food security and health. She relayed Dr. Seck's call for a broader, inclusive approach to problem-solving, emphasizing the role of the informal sector and the need to integrate vulnerable groups into the digital economy. She concluded that collaboration is the cornerstone of sustainable and impactful digital transformation.

3. **Engr. Christiana Onoja**, CEO, SheCode.ai & Founder/ED Partnership for African Women Advancement (PAWA) Initiative an ICT youth advocate, offered a youth-focused perspective on Africa's digital future. She highlighted that by 2030, four in every ten young global leaders will be African, underscoring the strategic importance of youth inclusion. Africa's most valuable asset, she said, is not its infrastructure but its people. Engr. Onoja urged African countries to move from pilot projects to real-scale implementation and execution. She proposed that every country establish a **national ICT council** composed of multi-stakeholder representatives from government and civil society to academia and the private sector. These councils should co-design, co-implement, and co-own ICT policies to ensure sustainability. Furthermore, she recommended the development of national digital talent pipelines aligned with current market demands in areas such as AI, cybersecurity, and entrepreneurship. According to her, the focus should not just be on training programs but on sustainable education pathways that begin from primary school and connect to jobs and business opportunities. She also called for increased funding for youth and women-led

innovation initiatives, citing the example of her work with *She Code AI*. Her rousing message called on stakeholders to move “from promises to performance, pilots to policy, and participation to power.”

4. **Ms. Baratang Miya**, Founder of Girlhype, a champion of digital skills for women and girls, contributed to the panel by emphasizing the importance of **inclusive digital policies**. She pointed out that only 12% of youth-led organizations have been involved in policy development across Africa, signaling a significant gap in youth participation. She also noted a lack of clarity on women-led organization participation in digital policymaking. Ms. Miya recommended the adoption of a **Women and Youth Inclusion Scorecard** by member states to track progress and identify gaps in participation. She echoed the importance of digital literacy and capacity building, urging that skills development should be linked directly to job creation especially in underrepresented sectors such as AI and cybersecurity. Finally, she advocated for ethical AI policies and data governance frameworks that are aligned with human rights principles, reinforcing the need for responsible digital transformation

5. **Dr. Jimson Olufuye**, the moderator, introduced the academic representative, **Prof. Abayomi Jegede**, Professor of Computer Science and Information Technology at Edo State University, Nigeria. Prof. Jegede expressed appreciation for the opportunity to contribute and emphasized the need for Africa to prioritize impactful, high-level ICT research. He argued that research is the bedrock of development and innovation, highlighting how Africa typically consumes solutions developed abroad without contributing substantially to the innovation pipeline. He advocated for deep science as the foundation of technological breakthroughs and urged that software solutions developed in Africa should be scalable, not restricted to local deployment. He stressed that scientific advancement in mathematics, statistics, and programming must underpin technological efforts such as AI and machine learning, with implications for economic growth, political stability, and national security.

Prof. Jegede further emphasized that Africa must shift from being a consumer of technology to becoming a producer of scalable IT solutions. He noted that research should not be confined to academia alone and called for strong collaboration between academia and industry. He observed that many African IT companies lack dedicated research and innovation units and recommended that industries establish such units and collaborate with academia to develop and implement scalable solutions. He concluded his remarks by reiterating the importance of industry-academia synergy in strengthening Africa’s technological capacity.

6. **Ms. Deborah Comparin**, Technical Director of the Secure Identity Alliance, Europe, represented the technical community. She began her remarks with an imaginative scenario, asking participants to consider the consequences of losing all forms of legal identity. She emphasized that digital identity is fundamental to accessing services such as banking, education, healthcare, and cross-border movement. Deborah stressed the importance of governments working alongside private sector partners to digitalize legal identities like passports and driver’s licenses. She also highlighted the need for academia and civil society to ensure privacy and system security are upheld.

She celebrated the creation of **OSIA**, the first African-born international standard for digital identity, developed through collaboration among 15 African governments, the private sector, and academia. OSIA has since been recognized by the ITU and implemented in countries like Monaco, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Alaska. She noted that multi-stakeholder engagements are ongoing, referencing AfICTA-SIDI workshop session at the Internet Governance Forum 2025 where cross-border interoperability was discussed. Deborah concluded by outlining three calls to action: initiate regional pilots for digital identity

interoperability, align policies and technical standards, and adopt a whole-of-society approach to ensure inclusive, privacy-conscious digital identity ecosystems

7. **Mr. Wisdom Donkor**, CEO of .GH, Ghana Domain Name Registry, followed with insights from the technical community. He highlighted the role of the .gh domain in promoting digital sovereignty and supporting innovation, governance, and economic growth in Ghana. He stressed the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach, asserting that impactful digital policies require input from government, the private sector, civil society, academia, and the technical community. Wisdom emphasized that digital transformation must prioritize local content creation and that Ghana is already engaging in reforms that encourage inclusive governance of the digital space.

He cited examples from across Ghana from startups in Accra to creatives in Northern Ghana and urged the rest of Africa to follow a similarly inclusive path. He advocated for regional and sub-regional African bodies to embrace multi-stakeholder principles not just in words, but in actionable frameworks. Donkor concluded by affirming Ghana's commitment to collaborative public infrastructure building, rooted in shared responsibility and the values outlined in the São Paulo guidelines.

8. **Dr. Kossi Amessinou**, Head of Private Sector Monitoring & Support Service at the Ministry of Economy and Finances, Benin Republic, shared his government's progress in digital advocacy. He mentioned how African populations are increasingly engaging on social media despite challenges in accessing advanced technologies like AI. He called for more investment in digital technologies to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically identifying the financing of solar energy and data centers as critical challenges to overcome.

9. **Engr. Kunle Olorundare**, President/CEO of the Internet Society (ISOC) Nigeria Chapter, spoke next. He focused on shaping Africa's ICT future through the ISOC's multi-stakeholder engagement, aligned with WSIS+20 and the São Paulo guidelines. He highlighted the importance of securing a permanent mandate for the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), which he described as a crucial global platform for dialogue. Kunle emphasized the recognition of national and regional initiatives (NRIs) and the need to ensure technological neutrality through inclusive governance mechanisms.

He advocated for Africa's active involvement in developing Internet standards through organizations like the Internet Engineering Task Force, Internet Research Task Force and ITU. He encouraged African stakeholders to lead initiatives such as Mutually Agreed Norms for Routing Security (MANRS) to combat cyberthreats like Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) hijacking and also deploy DNSSEC in all African countries. Kunle also discussed ISOC's advocacy for foundational infrastructure and policies that enable emerging technologies, including smart cities, and concluded by affirming the necessity of cross-border, cross-sector collaboration for Africa's digital future.

10. **Dr. Jamal Tonzua**, Deputy Director General of the Cyber Security Authority of Ghana, focused on policy recommendations to strengthen Africa's ICT future. He proposed three key actions: co-developing regional cybersecurity and data protection frameworks, building inclusive digital trust infrastructures, and institutionalizing multi-stakeholder governance platforms. He noted that successful implementation of frameworks such as the AU Digital Strategy and Malabo Convention depends on stakeholder ownership across private innovators, civil society, and academia. Dr. Tonzua argued that trust infrastructures should be governed by multi-stakeholder boards with human rights oversight. He concluded by

underscoring that multi-stakeholder participation is not just an ideal but a necessary model for secure and inclusive digital transformation in Africa.

11. Finally, **Ms. Olatokunbo Oyeleye**, Director, Digital Economy Department at the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), spoke from the Nigerian government's perspective. She noted the government's active role in driving multi-stakeholder engagement and emphasized the importance of partnerships. She highlighted infrastructure development, digital skills training, and the promotion of community networks as strategic priorities. Ms. Oyeleye described a bottom-up approach to infrastructure expansion, referencing the Digital Bridge project aimed at connecting underserved communities through 120 kilometers of planned infrastructure.

She mentioned collaborations with the Rural Electrification Agency, recognizing that electricity is a foundational requirement for digital development. Ms. Oyeleye also stressed the need for deeper engagement beyond the federal level, calling for greater collaboration with sub-national entities to accelerate digital inclusion.

In closing, **Dr. Jimson Olufuye** thanked all panelists for their insightful contributions. He remarked that the discussions clearly demonstrated the value of multi-stakeholder engagement and reinforced the urgency of moving beyond discussions into action. As Africa prepares for its digital future, the session emphasized the need for robust policies, inclusive frameworks, sustained youth and women engagement, and multi-stakeholder collaboration that aligns with both WSIS+20 goals and the continent's broader development aspirations.

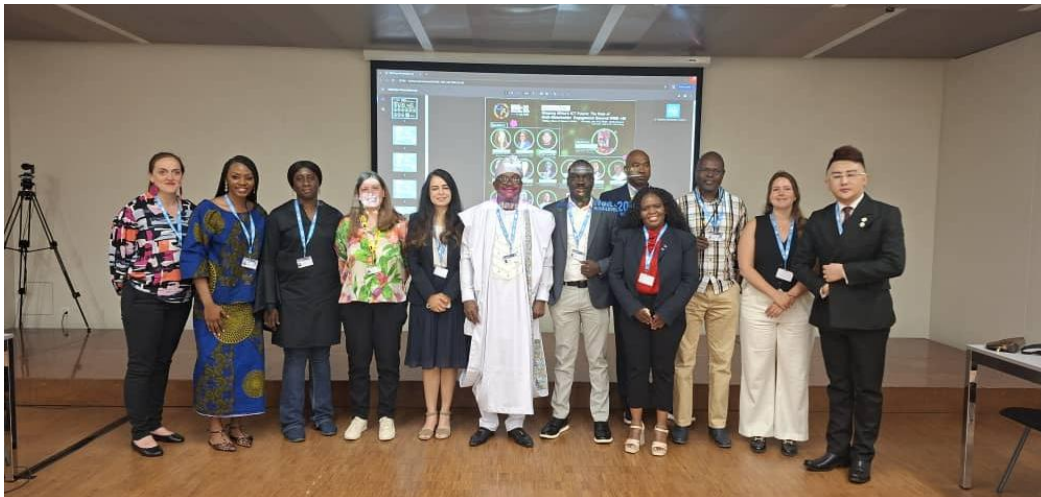
Action Points:

1. **Urgency of Digital Inclusion:** The session underscored Africa's urgent digital needs in respect to low Internet penetration (39%), weak cybersecurity (29.1%), and less than 1% of global data centers despite constituting 19% of the global population. This highlights the need for immediate, inclusive digital action.
2. **Multi-stakeholder Collaboration:** It was emphasized that governments alone cannot drive ICT growth. Inclusive collaboration across government, private sector, academia, civil society, and the technical community is essential to localize and implement digital policies effectively, guided by frameworks like the São Paulo Multi-stakeholder guidelines.
3. **Youth and Women as Catalysts:** Youth and women were identified as key to Africa's ICT future. Their inclusion in policy-making and innovation through initiatives like SheCode.ai and GirlHype demonstrated how targeted support can drive scalable digital impact.
4. **Shift to Innovation and Production:** Africa must move from tech consumption to innovation. Limited R&D in local ICT firms was flagged as a barrier. Greater academia-industry collaboration and local innovation are critical to building globally competitive solutions.
5. **Digital Identity and Trust:** The OSIA framework was celebrated as a proof of Africa's capacity to lead in digital identity standards. Participants highlighted digital trust, human rights, and inclusive governance as cornerstones for successful regional digital transformation.

Key Recommendations

1. **Establish ICT Councils:** Countries should set up national multi-stakeholder ICT councils to co-create and monitor digital strategies, ensuring all sectors especially youth and civil society are involved from policy design to implementation.
2. **Build Talent Pipelines:** Develop digital talent pipelines from early education to employment, focusing on high-demand skills like AI, cybersecurity, and data science to meet market needs and close the skills gap.
3. **Fund Inclusive Innovation:** Increase funding for youth and women-led tech initiatives. Ensure that financing is accessible, transparent, and responsive to the unique barriers these groups face in the digital space.
4. **Secure Digital Identity Systems:** Promote adoption of secure, interoperable digital identity systems, aligned with global standards like OSIA and backed by civil society to protect user rights and enable cross-border access.
5. **Strengthen Research and Infrastructure:** Boost R&D through industry-academia collaboration and close digital infrastructure gaps like broadband and electricity by replicating inclusive models such as Nigeria's Digital Bridge.
6. **Get more involved in Standardizations and Policy Development Process:** create more awareness and ensure active participation of Africa in the standardization activities of bodies like Internet Engineering Task Force, Internet Research Task Force, International Telecommunications Union etc.

Pictures





Speaking...

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Engagement Beyond WSIS +20

Prof. Paul O. Jemitola
Air Vice Marshal (rtd), Aerospace
Engineer and Technology Leader

From Maureen Owusu-Addae to everyone
Hello and good day I'm Maureen from Ghana via US. Let's connect
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/maur...>

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Oyeyemi Kayode



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Engr. Christiana Onoja
CEO, SheCode ai & Founder/ED
Partnership for African Women
Advancement (PAWA) Initiative

From Mawuko Kpatah to everyone
Good morning from Ghana

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Engr. Kunle Olorundare
President CEO, Internet Society
Nigeria Chapter

From Maureen Owusu-Addae to everyone
Hello and good day I'm Maureen from Ghana via US. Let's connect
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/maur...>

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Dr kossi AMESSI...

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Oyeyemi Kayode

Dr. Oluwaseun Olorundare

Maureen Owusu...

Wisdom Dunkar

Technical Modera...

Paul Jemitola

Moderator



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Head, Digital Economy Dept.
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