11TH WEST AFRICAN INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

THEME: "SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS FOR A ROBUST INTERNET GOVERNANCE ECOSYSTEM"

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COMMUNIQUE
[ORIGINAL VERSION: ENGLISH]

We, the participants of the 11th West African Internet Governance Forum (WAIGF), meeting in Banjul, from 25th to 26th July 2019, representing the Internet governance initiatives of the following fifteen (15) countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo;

With the participation and support of the following partners: ECOWAS Commission, the Government of Gambia, African Union, AFRINIC, Facebook, ICANN, IGFSA, ISOC, WATRA and World Wide Web Foundation.

- Recalling the results of the previous editions of the West African Internet Governance Forum which were held respectively in Accra, Dakar, Lagos, Freetown, Abidjan, Abuja, Niamey, Cotonou and Ouagadougou;
- Considering the critical importance of the Internet to the economy of countries and the need for greater access to affordable Internet
- Recognising the need to ensure user and market confidence to sustainably own the benefits of the Internet at the community level;
- Desirous, on one hand, to build an innovative, dynamic, prosperous, and united sub-regional Internet community and, on the other, a stable and secure Internet ecosystem;
- Taking into account the need to build the capacity of youths through the West Africa School on Internet Governance (WASIG) to increase youth participation in public policy issues that Internet Governance focusses on;
- Recognising the need to continue the WASIG to facilitate youth participation in the WAIGF.

1) Report that:

    a) The 12th Forum shall hold in Sierra Leone/Mali in 2020
    b) The 13th Forum shall hold in Niger in 2021
    c) The WASIG shall be organised as a pre-event of the WAIGF

2) Recommend;

a) On Multistakeholderism in the Internet Governance Ecosystem

    i. Encourage the participation of all stakeholder groups as part of the steering committee or working group and their involvement in National and Regional IGFs in order to achieve multistakeholderism.
    ii. Call on involvement from government so that policies can easily be changed to laws.
    iii. Encourage equal rights and opportunities for all stakeholders within the Internet Governance ecosystem.

b) On Data Governance across borders

    i. Urge data producers to be clear on their responsibilities and encourage that an open data system be used.

c) On Media and Content

    i. Urge all stakeholders to be aware of fake news and not share fake news.
    ii. Urge that journalists should be well trained on professional conduct and ethics.
    iii. Encourage sharing of more positive stories from African countries.

d) On Access and infrastructure beyond connectivity

    i. Call on Member States to address the challenges of digital literacy within the region.
    ii. Urge Member States to address the issues surrounding access, connectivity and affordability in the region.
    iii. Urge Member States to address infrastructure gaps in our countries.
    iv. Encourage Member States to establish Data centres that meet current standards, security and best practices requirements.
    v. Call on Member States to establish Internet Exchange Points to address local traffic issues.

vi.   Urge Member States to Extend Fibre to the home (FTTH)/last mile

e) On Digital Rights and Freedom of expression online

i.   Develop high quality content for dissemination on media platforms
ii.   Call on more stakeholder engagement and partnerships with governments to avoid internet disruptions and shutdowns.
iii.   Encourage Member States to reflect the digital economy in future constitutional reviews.

Express our gratitude to the people and the Government of Gambia for hosting this 11th edition.

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Banjul. July 26, 2019
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