



North Africa Internet Governance Forum (NAIGF)



Report

North African Internet Governance Forum (NAIGF'21)

Digital development: priorities and opportunities in the North African region

12-13 November 2021

Nouakchott, Mauritania

The fifth edition of the North African Internet Governance Forum (NAIGF'21) was held in Nouakchott, Mauritania on 12-13 November 2021 in hybrid mode due to the COVID-19 pandemic, back to back with the 3rd North African School of Internet Governance held from 9 to 11 November 2021.

The forum was organized with the support of the United Nations and the Host Country, Mauritania under the theme “Digital development: priorities and opportunities in the North African region”.

Opening Session

The Chair of the NAIGF MAG Mr. Aziz Hillali opened the 5th annual forum and thanked Mr. Abdelaziz Ould Dahi the Mauritanian Minister of digital transition, innovation and modernization of the administration, and Mauritanian officials for their welcome and their total support in the preparation and organization of this forum.

Four Sessions

Four thematic sessions led by leading experts from North African countries (9) and an expert from Sweden addressed topics such as digital transformation, Blockchain & Crypto-currency technology, opportunities and challenges of the digital economy & e-commerce, and data governance in the era of digital transformation.

It was a good opportunity to discover the different strategies of countries like Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Morocco in terms of digital transformation, the accomplishments already achieved, the barriers encountered and the projects to come.

The debate on Blockchain technology has touched on aspects such as the integrity and immutability of data, their transparency and its consequence on lack of privacy, the high power consumption and the size of the database which increases infinitely, especially for large chains like bitcoin.

The economy of different countries is increasingly digital; The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this mutation. Connectivity and bandwidth challenges condition a reliable digital economy

With the digital transformation underway, the issue of data security has become one of the hottest topics affecting states and governments as well as business enterprises and even individuals. Several laws and regulations have been put into effect for data protection, but since the Internet is global, their applicability remains very limited in different jurisdictions. The European General Data Protection Regulation is the only one that has extraterritorial scope as it applies even to non-European companies that collect and use data from Europeans.

Closing Session

The school and Forum joint closing session was chaired by the Secretary General of the Mauritanian Ministry of Digital Transition, Innovation and Modernization of the Administration.

Mr. Aziz Hilali, Chair of the NAIGF MAG thanked the experts present and those who contributed remotely for their interventions on everything related to new technologies and for the rich, open and interesting exchanges with the participants.

He made a special mention of consideration for the ministry team who helped in the preparation of the two events and who were mobilized throughout the week. They have been wonderful.

He finally asked the Secretary General of the Ministry of Digital Transition, Innovation and Modernization of the Administration to reiterate the warm thanks of the NAIGF MAG to the Minister and through him the Mauritanian government for their support and their hospitality.

Attendance

The NAIGF, held in a hybrid format, was attended by 27 participants in the meeting room and 56 online. The number of face to face attendees was restricted by the organizing committee to keep 50% of the seats empty to avoid COVID contamination.

The majority of the face to face participants were from the host country Mauritania (20) while the remaining 7 were from Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia.

The online participants were from almost all North African countries (Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Egypt and Mauritania). Only Sudan was completely absent.

There were more females than males for the face to face participants as well as for online ones (55% women and 45% men).

For stakeholder diversity, we had participants from:

- Civil Society 47%
- Academia 30%
- Government 13%
- Private Sector 10%

