THE 11th UGANDA INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM 2021

Date: November 12, 2021

Venue: Hybrid

Theme: Envisioning an Internet of Trust and Resilience in Uganda

Introduction

The Uganda Internet Governance Forum (UIGF) is a multi-stakeholder meeting that brings together representatives from government, civil society, academia, technical community, private sector and individuals interested in Internet Governance (IG) issues. The objectives of the UIGF are to: Establish IG issues relevant to Uganda; Build consensus on national and regional positions around relevant IG issues and create awareness about various IG issues including online safety in Uganda especially among vulnerable users. Since its inauguration in 2006, the UIGF has continued to discuss and address Internet Policy issues pertinent to the country. To date, eleven (11) forums have been held with each addressing different thematic areas. The 2021 Uganda Internet Governance Forum (UIGF) was held on November 12 2021 under the theme - Envisioning an Internet of Trust and Resilience in Uganda.

This year's forum was preceded by the first school on internet governance and the 2nd Youth Internet Governance Forum. The UIGF follows a bottom up approach, which includes soliciting for topics from interested parties. The call for topics shared on different mailing lists and the forum website. The topics are then selected by a multistakeholder organizing committee comprising representatives from government, civil society and private sector to form the main theme and subthemes for the forum. The UIGF 2021 was proudly sponsored by the Internet Foundation, IGFSA and CIPESA.

This year's forum attracted 110 participants with 30 attending physically. A total of 2 sessions were hosted this year to include:

Session one: Tracking Uganda's Steps for a Transformative digital economy Post Covid. Panelists included Bob Kansiime, Airtel Uganda; Noah Balyensaavu, Crypto Savannah; Ms. Lillian Nalwoga, ISOC - Uganda who represented and James Beronda, Uganda Communications Commission (UCC).

Key highlights:

James Beronda, shared that despite Covid 19 Pandemic, there was been an increase in the number of mobile phone subscribers in Uganda. Three million subscribers were added on to the mobile network platform and there was 9% growth in cellular devices that were connected on the mobile network and what is interesting in this statistic, 30% were smart phone devices and the 70% were basic feature phones. Also an increase in data traffic, 69 billion MBs from 58 billion and it showed an 11 billion growth. This could be however attributed to the fact that people had to start working from home and students studying from home. It also shows the dire need for more broadband access. To take advantage of the network availability, Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) identified 3 major concerns for the masses i.e. 1) Digital literacy; 2) Device; 3.) Affordability.

In terms of digital literacy, the commission has partnered with Uganda Institute for Information and Communication (UICT) to provide community ICT training. The training were conducted online due to

COVID-19, and there was a huge interest in digital literacy around the communities the commission visited. A vivid example is that of the different farmers that attended the trainings and learned the value of having smartphones. Farmers got to know that they could enhance value and help themselves in sourcing for markets for their produce, look out for best practices on how to improve their farm yields to mention but a few.

On the issue of devices, the commission is piloting a project of giving out smart devices to the poorest households in around 8 districts around the country, train these people on how to use the smart devices and go through digital skills training in the effort to get as many people connected. The target group is the school-age-going children who are seen as change agents within their families and communities.

In terms of affordability, the commission has introduced an app that helps to monitor the Quality of Service (QoS) of mobile telecommunications companies. They have moved a step ahead to monitor the QoS parameters, not just to have signal but are people having meaningful connectivity on their respective networks. The feedback from these parameters is then communicated to the telecoms to improve on the services provided.

Lillian Nalwoga, shared that civil society has been active in the post covid era by running several initiatives in digital literacy through e-learning and developing the digital skill set of many young people especially women and children. She noted that a number of challenges affecting internet users to include internet accessibility, affordability, and Quality of Service. Calling for finding lasting solutions to improve these areas. In regardSo, we have to look at how best can we improve in these areas and how are we protecting our critical infrastructure, say when we have network disruptions, you will realize that many of the services we have migrated online will come to a grinding halt, services like online banking, telemedicine, online shopping, etc. Coupled with this is the issue of the rising cost of internet, the digital divide is not coming any smaller but bigger. She also called for the need to improve cyber security as more people are joining the internet.

Bob Kasiime shared that Airtel has there has been a rolling out of 4G network coverage around the country for people to access fast internet and also provide the most technologically advanced mobile devices like the 4G pocket Wi-Fi routers at very affordable prices, broadband kits to cater for the different needs of the different users. Appropriate data bundles at varying prices have been introduced, again to cater for the needs of the different users at very affordable rates. Prepaid and post-paid plans are now availed to customers and so in terms of accessibility, they feel they have done something.

He also shared that what is fundamental to note is how we all participate and thrive in the digital economy, and how we use technology to bring value to society and humanity as whole. The 4th Industrial Revolution through technology is changing the way we do business, the way we relate and interact with one another and so we cannot lose sight of the impact of what technology is doing.

Digital transformation in the private sector perspective has greatly evolved and it is really fast-paced when it comes to trading value. It is important to show people the value that technology brings. Take an example of a mobile phone, when you install a Safeboda app, there is a lot more you can do on that app than just enjoying a safe ride from one place to another. With the app, right now you can make orders for meals, you can transport goods and valuables from one point to another, you can load airtime on your mobile through the same app, so it has gone beyond just ordering a ride to a whole new dimension of providing multiple services on just that one app. It has also revolutionized

the way formal transportation is done in Kampala and many young people are earning from it tremendously.

With this example it shows the business value that has been created and developed through technology and it is not just about having a digital device in your hands but what value can you derive out of it is what is most paramount. Therefore, when we show value in having these digital devices, then more and more people will be connected and this will create a multiplier effect that will bring down the cost of internet connectivity and also the cost of devices.

In regard to internet disruptions, the panel noted that perhaps governments especially in Africa have not fully appreciated the value of the internet and that is why you will find many of them switching it off for one reason or another. It is important to note that several e-government services are affected with internet disruptions leading to financial losses for both governments and citizens.

The panel also called for not only making the internet more accessible but also safe and secure. Noting that it is one thing to have more people joining the network but a whole different issue of ensuring that people are in a safe space and their privacy is guaranteed. Security cannot be an afterthought, it must be part of the expansion process, it must be part of the advancement process as more and more people are joining the internet.

Session two: Trust, Security and Stability : Panelists Ben Munanura - Uganda Police force, Emmanuel Chagara from Milima Security, Peace Olivia Amuge from Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), and Ben Kyemba - Research and Education Network for Uganda (RENU).

Chagara raised the concern of growing cybercrimes sharing that in the past 10 or so years, there has been a growing rate and real concern of cybercrimes and significant loses registered across the globe. Individuals, government institutions and private sector companies (financial institutions and SMEs) have all been attacked or fallen prey to these online crimes. A study from Global survey on internet privacy and freedom of expression indicated that more than 65% users now fear using the internet because of the concerns around cybercrime and so there is a growing concern about privacy.

In Uganda, the Data Privacy Act of 2019 is aiding and helping to promote transparency and trust over the internet. This clearly shows there is a growing demand for privacy among internet users and so people need to understand that privacy is no longer a privilege but a right. When some entity has access to people's data, then it is held accountable in the event that the data leaks or is held by 3rd party without prior consent.

Important to note, anybody or any entity, be it government or private, you can be a victim of cyber-attacks. So as more and more people fall victim, then the fundamental question is how can we protect ourselves or our data against such attacks? This is in turn brings people to a realization and demand for their right to privacy and data protection.

On gender based violence, Amuge observed an increase in online gender-based violence especially for women in Uganda during the pandemic. Noting the countless reports of cyber-stalking, sexual harassment, cyber-bullying, and non-consensual intimate image sharing, body-shaming and the like. This is has been made worse by digital illiteracy since many of us have been forced to join the digital spaces online, she said. Besides, not many women are able to navigate many of these digital platforms and they will not find the time to seat down and learn how to navigate these different platforms.

From law enforcement, Munanura shared that the cyberspace and physical space have merged and therefore a formidable force has been established to fight crime not only in the physical but also over

online spaces. To keep safe in the cyberspace, he raise concern for the need need to ask ourselves what our digital assets are? where are they located? how secure are they (since the physical and online spaces have merged)? Who are the people or entities we are interacting with over the online spaces? Then after identifying the digital assets then we need to prioritize them, for example where is the money located, and quantify your risk on all these critical assets and what kind of security has been provided for them.

He also shared that when strong demands come on security, then convenience is thrown out of the room, like having a multi-factor authentication for say emails and social media accounts. He further noted that over 85% of vulnerabilities on our systems are actually by ignoring basic cyber hygiene like having a multi-factor authentication, having a strong password, how we react to an email that is coming from someone we do not know, and if we can avoid such bad behaviours and practices online, then we can easily promote our personal security.

In conclusion, the Uganda Police force and judiciary need to build more capacity in detecting and investigating cybercrime cases. The force should open up more desks in the different regions of the country. To have effective justice, the judiciary needs to equip itself more to handle cybercrime cases, not only in Kampala but elsewhere in the country. Police needs to work with Civil Society organizations and private sector to comfortably fight cybercrimes and more awareness of cybercrimes is needed between the different players.

On the internet there is over 70,000 different networks where traffic traverses the internet so if you fail to access a service over the internet or there is a denial of service, then there is a problem at the core of your network. This is where MANRS comes in to provide accountability on the traffic that is traversing of the internet and so try as much as possible to encourage the different ISPs and telecoms to join the MANRS initiative. We need to know that our traffic is safe at the core of our different networks.

It is important to note that when envisioning an Internet of Trust and Resilience, security of the internet is very important. The Internet Society (ISOC) came up with MANRS initiative which are the mutually agreed norms about routing security. It brings together network operators who believe and care about routing security making sure that the core of the internet is absolutely secure as traffic is being switched from one network to another (routing).

It is important that we build trust and have more people having meaning connectivity and meaningful access and we need to bring more marginalized groups over the internet like women and girls in rural areas, persons with disability, and tackle some of the issues that have increased the gender digital gap like affordability and digital literacy, online violence and policies that promote access to the marginalized groups. We need to uphold and promote digital human rights and also be accountable to society by protecting people's data and information.

Virtual Private Networks (VPN), is a technology that encrypts traffic when communicating between one person's digital device and the destination server. The reason behind this technology is to create anonymity and also shield your traffic from prying eyes and allow traffic to move from the source to the destinations. It also helps your traffic to bypass any restrictions that are in between the source and destination. However, if the VPN is not paid for, how do you trust that your data is safe. Therefore, if you are not paying for the product, then you are the product. Do not use a VPN if you are not paying for it because free ones are extremely dangerous.

In a nutshell, cybercrime affects all of us. Cybercriminals do not discriminate in age, gender, color, ethnicity, profession, or religion. So there has to be a concerted effort from all concern to come together and fight it vigorously like we do on physical crime. We need a cyberspace that we can trust, that is secure and reliable.

The UIGF 2021 was proudly sponsored by the Internet Foundation, IGFSA and CIPESA.

Event programme

8.30-9.00	**Arrival and registration of participants**
9.00-9.30	**Welcome remarks -** Lillian Nalwoga, Coordinator UIGF
9:30 - 10:00	Youth IGF recap - Joan Katambi
10:00 - 11:00	*Session one:* ***High level panel:*** Tracking Uganda's steps *for a transformative digital economy post Covid -19* • Gabriel Iguma, Moderator • Bob Kansiime, Airtel Uganda • Noah Balyesaanvu, Crypto Savannah • James Beronda, Uganda Communications Commission • Lillian Nalwoga,
11:00 - 11::30	**Health break**
11.30 – 12:30	**Session two: Trust, Security, and stability** • Emmanuel Chagara, CEO, Milma Security • Emmanuel Mugabi, Manager, Governance and Risk, NITA-U • Dan Munanura, Commissioner CID Uganda Police • Ben Kyemba, Network Engineer, RENU
12:30 - 1:00	**USIG graduation ceremony** **Closing remarks**
1:00 - 2:00pm	**Lunch and departure**

Forum photos