



MAURITIUS
IGF
INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM
www.mauritius-igfforum.org

MAURITIUS INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

20

22

INTRODUCTION

Mauritius-Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a collaborative leadership event that encourages policy dialogue between State and Non-State actors and amongst stakeholders on the issue of Internet Governance. The Mauritius IGF tries to group together all stakeholders whereby they are treated equally in their role of dialogue. It gives an exclusive space for people to interact and develop solutions concerning Internet problems. Mauritius IGF aims at providing a forum at the national and regional levels that engages industry, government, academicians, educational institutions, media and civil society on debates about Internet Governance issues. The importance of the issues is directed towards stakeholder's empowerment, of all disciplines, gender and ages.

Mauritius IGF 2022 main theme was Trustworthy Internet for Children in the Digital World.

During the official opening ceremony of Mauritius Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2022, the Master of Ceremonies described Mauritius IGF as an event involving concerned people, in other words, people who are willing and interested to make a change. He introduced the topic and outlined the advantages that internet has brought forward, including an enhanced sense of community, global connection, freedom of speech and others. He further pointed out that Internet equally poses certain threats, including misinformation, lack of safety among others. He finally concluded that the issues should be managed and that better ways should be implemented to cater to present needs as well as future needs.

MESSAGE FROM OUR SPEAKERS

Mr Mahendranath Busgopaul, Director, Mauritius IGF and Halley Movement:

Mr Mahendranath Busgopaul was the first speaker in his capacity as the Director of Mauritius IGF and he welcomed all the participants and guests informing them about the goals that Halley Movement Coalition aims to achieve through this dedicated session.

He specifically mentioned about Mauritius IGF being acknowledged by the UN IGF and discussed about Mauritius IGF 2022, especially about the topic Trustworthy Internet for Children in the Digital World. He highlighted the fact that currently children's lives are dictated by the amount of time spent on the Internet. He noted that TikTok is one such platform which encounters a lot of young users and expressed his pleasure at having met the representative of TikTok this year. He emphasised that the conclusion of the meeting was that Internet regulation is essential to counteract the issues of fraud and invasion of privacy. He urged the participants and guests to learn more about Internet Governance and to provide their insights in order to develop solutions to counter the said issues. He expressed his hope about the recommendations being implemented by the government and other decision-making bodies. He equally expressed his pleasure about the launch of the pilot Mauritius Youth IGF by Halley Movement in collaboration with United Nations IGF. He lastly thanked the participants of the SIG 2022 (School of Internet Governance) and he announced that certificates will be distributed to honour the SIG 2022 learners.

Mr James Chirwa, Head, Member Services, AFRINIC:

Mr James Chirwa equally expressed his pleasure for attending the 2022 Mauritius IGF. He discussed about the lack of security during internet use and he emphasised the fact that children are more prone to be victims of cybercrimes. He informed the participants about the objectives of AFRINIC, principally being to provide a secure and accessible Internet for sustainable digital growth in Africa. He expressed his hope at developing efficient solutions at the 2022 Mauritius IGF and to make internet safer for the younger generation.

MESSAGE FROM OUR SPEAKERS

Hon. Mr Oudorao Apajee, Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Cote D'Ivoire:

Hon. Mr Oudorao Apajee expressed his pleasure for attending the 2022 Mauritius IGF. He congratulated Halley Movement on the recent successful launch of the pilot Mauritius Youth IGF. He noted that while Internet seemed to be impossible in the past, it is now omnipresent. He expressed his concern about Internet being unsafe with no control and complete freedom and the resulting lack of digital growth in Africa as a continent. He urged all African countries, including Mauritius and Cote D'Ivoire to act in unity so as to promote digital growth in Africa and lead to the continent's prosperity. He urged the participants and guests to come together to protect our younger generation.

Hon. Mr Denise Khode, Presiding Officer, African Union, ECOSOCC:

Hon. Mr Denise Khode, expressed his pleasure for attending the 2022 Mauritius IGF. He congratulated Halley Movement on the recent successful launch of the pilot Mauritius Youth IGF. He informed the participants about the objectives of the African Union, ECOSOCC, especially to encourage African countries to abide to African Union principles, including good governance. He emphasised on good Internet Governance and the benefits of such governance to Africa as a continent. He identified a prevalent issue concerning internet, i.e., online human rights abuse. He strongly condemned cybercrimes such as cyber terrorism occurring in Kenya, Nigeria and other African countries. He complimented the participants for the strong interest they are showing for this endeavour and for the digital growth of Africa.

MESSAGE FROM OUR SPEAKERS

Hon. Ms Celine Lemmel, Chief of Mission, International Organisation for Migration:

Hon. Ms Celine Lemmel expressed her pleasure at being invited to the 2022 Mauritius IGF. She equally appreciated the strong support that the participants and guests are providing to this endeavour. She informed the participants about the objectives of International Organisation for Migration, mainly to ensure the orderly and humane management of migration. She described today's era as the 'era of e-everything', thus indicating the prevalence of internet today and she highlighted that Mauritius has the highest rate of internet intervention at 64% in Africa. Subsequently she condemned the lack of security of Internet and she expressed her concern for children and their families. She urged the participants to propose solutions so as to counteract the ill-effects of the Internet.

PANEL SESSION 1

Mr Shyam Reedah- Digital Literacy, e-education and meaningful connection

Mr Shyam Reedah was the first presenter and he discussed about the subtopic Digital Literacy, e-education and meaningful connection. He described digital literacy as the fourth pillar of a child's education. He emphasised on the prevalent use of digital technologies and the requirement of digital technologies for organisations to survive. He thereby pointed out the importance of being digital literate today. He subsequently highlighted the recent pandemic and the transition from classroom-based learning to e-education. He emphasised on the advantages of e-education, including reduced costs and the ill-effects, which include the need for management and training. He encouraged the transition in teaching methods and he further advocated for Mauritius to become an ICT-based economy. Lastly, he discussed about meaningful connection as a result of use of digital technologies. He highlighted the fact that people are connecting more through social platforms and while these platforms bring people closer, they equally bring forth various risks, including cybercrimes. He emphasised on the requirement of good Internet Governance so as to render safe the use of Internet by children, organisations and people on social platforms.

Mr Eddie Meek- Global AI Governance for Sustainable Development

Mr Eddie Meek introduced the subtopic Global AI Governance for Sustainable Development. He highlighted the increased use of AI systems across the world and he discussed about the advantages and disadvantages of AI systems. He noted that while AI systems reduced errors and led to faster decisions, such systems can contribute to ill-effects such as accelerated hacking and AI Terrorism. As such, he noted that AI Governance is required so as to enable people to use the AI systems safely and fairly, and thereby to ensure sustainable development.

PANEL SESSION 1

Mr Ish Sookun- Online Child Sexual Education & Internet Governance

Mr Ish Sookun discussed about the subtopic of Online Child Sexual Education & Internet Governance. He highlighted the fact that with increased use of internet especially by children, these youngsters are exposed to a high level of information, irrespective of whether the information is beneficial or harmful. The children are equally exposed to sexual information, including pornography and as a result, they are receiving sexual education from wrong and unreliable resources. This can result into online child sexual exploitation and abuse. He concludes that good internet governance is necessary to protect children from such harmful information and to prevent such exploitation and abuse.

Q&A Session

Mr Reedah was asked whether the training of teachers is essential to acquire digital literacy and Mr. Reedah replied that the training of teachers should be accompanied with digitalised curriculum and e-learning.

PANEL SESSION 2

Mr Amreesh Phokeer- Artificial Intelligence, Ethics and Cultural Diversity

Mr Amreesh Phokeer subsequently discussed about the subtopic Artificial Intelligence, Ethics and Cultural Diversity. He emphasised on the fact that there is increased use of artificial intelligence in today's time. He noted that while the increased use of artificial intelligence is beneficial in terms of higher productivity, reduced errors and faster decision-making, it equally leads to ethical concerns. He clarified and noted that Artificial Intelligence may comprise of structural biases, which may in turn lead to intellectual domination and contemporary exertion of power. He recommended that to avoid such societal harm, it is essential to take into account different cultures when discussing about AI rules. He emphasised on the importance of cultural diversity in regards to AI rules so as to benefit all internet users across the world, irrespective of their culture.

Mr James Chirwa- Digital Democracy in times of Crisis

Lastly, Mr James Chirwa discussed about the subtopic of Digital Democracy in times of Crisis. He highlighted the fact that the increased use of digital technologies has led to an increased digital democracy, whereby interactive digital tools allow media sources to act as a forum and thereby to enable to public to express their opinion. He emphasised that while digital democracy is beneficial especially in times of crisis to prevent autocracy, lack of internet governance might result in unreliable and manipulative sources of information, which may do the opposite. He concluded by urging the participants to propose recommendations which will ensure internet governance and proper digital democracy.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CLOSING CEREMONY

All participants were requested to join the group work and to discuss on the aforementioned issues. They discussed all the issues and the recommendations stated by the aforementioned speakers.

They proposed the following recommendations:

- Develop apps that will enable parents to supervise their children's internet use.
- Provide hotlines for children who are victims of online sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Take into account cultural differences when developing AI rules.
- Organise workshops to create awareness in regards to ill-effects of internet and to promote safer use.
- Promote reliable sources of health care providers and media so as to ensure the distribution of accurate information.
- Develop apps that will prevent hacking of AI systems and AI terrorism.
- Identify the set of roles and responsibilities that the government has to carry out to ensure Internet Governance.
- Educate children on Internet Governance through Schools of Internet Governance.
- Provide training to employees of organisations so that they can navigate the use of AI systems safely.
- Introduce accountability criteria and sanctions for inaccurate and manipulative information.
- Implement human rights online.
- Enable people to choose how their data is to be used.

Mrs Leena, the Youth Coordinator of Mauritius Youth IGF delivered the closing speech, where she thanked the participants for their presence and for their contribution to the discussion.

Mr Mahendranath Busgopaul presented tokens of appreciation to each of the speakers and thanked all partners that supported the event.

Contact

Mahendranath Busgopaul - Director of Mauritius IGF

Port-Louis, Mauritius

www.hallemovement.org

mahen@hallemovement.org