JUMUIYA YA AFRIKA MASHARIKI

East Africa Internet Governance Forum - (EAIGF)

KICTANet
The Power of Communities

East Africa Internet Governance Forum

15th - 16th May 2025,

Nairobi Kenya.

Theme: "Advancing East Africa's Digital Governance Together"

Introduction

The East Africa Internet Governance Forum (EAIGF) has been a pivotal platform for dialogue on Internet governance issues in the region since 2008. As we approach the 12th edition of EAIGF in 2025, the forum continues to play a crucial role in shaping the digital landscape of East Africa. The rapid evolution of digital technologies and their impact on governance, economy, and society necessitates a collaborative approach to address emerging challenges and opportunities.

The digital landscape in East Africa has undergone a remarkable transformation since the first EAIGF. Internet penetration rates have soared, mobile technology has become ubiquitous, and digital services have become integral to daily life and economic activities across the region. This digital revolution has brought about unprecedented opportunities for growth, innovation, and social development. However, it has also introduced new challenges in areas such as cybersecurity, data protection, digital inclusion, and regulatory frameworks.

As East African nations continue to pursue ambitious digital transformation agendas, the need for coordinated and inclusive approaches to Internet governance has become increasingly apparent. The EAIGF serves as a critical forum for sharing experiences, best practices, and developing collaborative strategies to navigate the complex digital governance landscape.

The EAIGF 2025 offers a pivotal opportunity for East Africa to collectively shape its digital future. By fostering a multi-stakeholder dialogue, the forum addresses critical issues such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, data privacy, rights, governance and regulations, digital inclusion, and economic growth, ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered in shaping the region's digital landscape. This collaborative approach empowers stakeholders to actively participate in Internet governance, driving sustainable development and innovation across the region.

The 2025 EAIGF will be hosted by the Kenya ICT Action Network - KICTANet in partnership with East Africa Community - EAC and other East Africa NRIs under the theme, "Advancing East Africa's Digital Governance Together." The theme reflects the recognition that effective digital governance requires collective effort and shared vision. It underscores the importance of multi-stakeholder cooperation in shaping policies, standards, and practices that will enable East Africa to fully harness the benefits of the digital age while mitigating associated risks.

As the region stands at the cusp of a new era of digital transformation, the EAIGF 2025 provides a timely platform for stakeholders to come together, reflect on progress made, and chart a course for a digital future that is inclusive, secure, and conducive to sustainable development.

Objectives

The **EAIGF 2025** aims to achieve the following comprehensive objectives:

1. Foster multi-stakeholder dialogue on digital governance in East Africa:
    - Create an inclusive platform for diverse voices from government, private sector, civil society, academia, and technical communities.
    - Facilitate open discussions on pressing issues affecting the region's digital landscape.
    - Encourage the exchange of ideas, experiences, and best practices among participants.
2. Promote regional cooperation in advancing digital transformation:
    - Identify areas for collaborative efforts in digital infrastructure development.
    - Explore opportunities for harmonizing digital policies and regulations across East African countries.
    - Encourage the formation of regional partnerships and initiatives to address common digital challenges.
3. Address challenges and opportunities in the evolving digital landscape:
    - Analyze emerging trends in technology and their implications for East Africa.
    - Discuss strategies to mitigate risks associated with cybersecurity, data privacy, and digital rights.
    - Explore innovative approaches to leverage digital technologies for economic growth and social development.
4. Build capacity for meaningful participation in global Internet policy and governance:
    - Provide training and knowledge-sharing sessions on key Internet governance issues.
    - Empower East African stakeholders to effectively engage in international Internet governance forums.
    - Develop a pool of regional experts capable of representing East African interests on global platforms.
5. Align regional digital governance initiatives with sustainable development goals:
    - Examine the role of digital technologies in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
    - Identify ways to integrate digital governance strategies with national and regional development plans.
    - Promote the use of digital solutions to address social, economic, and environmental challenges in East Africa.
6. Enhance digital literacy and skills development across the region:
    - Discuss strategies to improve digital education and training programs.
    - Explore partnerships between educational institutions and the private sector to bridge the digital skills gap.
    - Promote initiatives that foster digital innovation and entrepreneurship among East African youth.
7. Evaluate the progress of previous EAIGF recommendations:
    - Review the implementation status of action items from past forums.
    - Identify success stories and lessons learned from regional digital governance initiatives.
    - Refine and update recommendations based on evolving regional needs and global best practices.

Key Focus Areas

- Digital Governance Framework: Explore strategies to enhance public sector digitalization and promote sustainable development across the region.
- AI Governance and Innovation: Address the challenges and opportunities presented by AI technologies, focusing on ethical development, responsible deployment, and fostering innovation ecosystems that empower local tech talent.
- Cybersecurity and Data Protection: Address the growing concerns of digital security and privacy in the era of increased connectivity, with a specific emphasis on harmonizing data protection laws across East Africa.
- Digital Inclusion: Discuss ways to bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to digital opportunities for all East African citizens.
- Innovation and Economic Growth: Examine the role of digital technologies, including AI, in fostering innovation and driving economic development in the region.
- Policy Harmonization: Work towards aligning national digital policies to create a cohesive regional approach to Internet governance, with a focus on data governance and protection frameworks.

Format and Participation

The EAIGF 2025 will follow a bottom-up, multi-stakeholder approach, bringing together representatives from governments, private sector, civil society, academia, and technical communities. The forum will feature:

- High-level panel discussions
- Interactive workshops and capacity-building sessions
- Youth-focused activities to engage the next generation of digital leaders
- Networking opportunities for stakeholders
- East Africa School on Internet Governance

Expected Outcomes

1. A comprehensive report on the state of digital governance in East Africa
2. Recommendations for policy interventions to improve regional digital governance
3. Strengthened partnerships among stakeholders for collaborative digital initiatives
4. Increased awareness and capacity on Internet governance issues among East African stakeholders.
5. Dialogue and engagement with policy makers and parliamentarians from East Africa.

Conclusion

As EAIGF 2025 concludes, it is expected to yield a comprehensive understanding of East Africa's digital governance landscape and a clear roadmap for future action. The forum's outcomes will guide policy decisions, foster regional cooperation, and drive innovation in the years to come. Through collective effort and shared vision, East Africa can emerge as a leader in digital governance, setting a model for inclusive and sustainable digital development that resonates across the continent and globally.

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