
EAST AFRICAN INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM 2025 REPORT

THEME: Advancing East Africa's Digital Governance Together.



East Africa Internet
Governance Forum - (EAIGF)

East Africa Governance Forum – (EAIGF) 2025

16 May 2025

#EAIGF2025

Introduction

The 2025 EAIGF was held on May 15 -16th, 2025 under the theme, "*Advancing East Africa's Digital Governance Together.*" The theme reflected the recognition that effective digital governance requires collective effort and shared vision. The theme also 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. The forum attracted 10 sessions and was attended by 273 participants representing all stakeholder groups.

First held in 2008, the East Africa Internet Governance Forum (EAIGF) is a platform for an inclusive multilateral, multi-stakeholder and multilingual discussion on issues pertinent to enhancing Internet development in East Africa and Internet Governance issues. The EAIGF has created a space for continued dialogue on Internet Governance issues and best practices and consequently spurred a momentum for localised integration of global practices on Internet Governance while also instituting a consensus-building process to develop a common understanding of Internet Governance issues as well as building policy capacity to enable meaningful participation in global Internet policy, governance, and development. Discussion from the regional forums such as the EAIGF feeds into the global Internet Governance Forum, which assembles contributions from across the world with the goal of realising the multistakeholder model at a global scale.

Main Objective of the EAIGF

The EAIGF is a platform for an inclusive multilateral, multi-stakeholder, and multilingual debate and discussion on issues pertinent to enhancing Internet Governance development in East Africa and beyond.

Specific objectives for EAIGF are as follows:

- To increase awareness and build capacity on Information Society and Knowledge Management issues for East African Internet users, to ensure that all stakeholders are well prepared for contribution and interaction.
- To ensure that the concerns of East African citizens are considered in the Regional and global IGF process.
- To put in place a coordinated process in East Africa for dealing with Information Society and Knowledge Management issues in the sub region.
- To strengthen the multi-stakeholder dialogue model for Information Society and Knowledge Management in East Africa through the regional and national fora.
- To ensure a multi-stakeholder representation in National and the Regional Forum in East Africa.
- To ensure that all the countries are part of the sub regional and to strengthen their national processes.
- To facilitate national and sub regional exchanges and interactions between countries and in the Sub Region.
- To facilitate follow up of EAIGF decisions and recommendations in appropriate regional and global fora.
- To promote use of local content in East Africa and knowledge in cyberspace.

Objectives of the EAIGF 2025

- Foster multi-stakeholder dialogue on digital governance in East Africa:
- Promote regional cooperation in advancing digital transformation:
- Address challenges and opportunities in the evolving digital landscape:
- Build capacity for meaningful participation in global Internet policy and governance:
- Align regional digital governance initiatives with sustainable development goals:
- Enhance digital literacy and skills development across the region:
- Evaluate the progress of previous EAIGF recommendations:

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

EAIGF 2025 Organising committee:

The 12th EAIGF was overseen by a 15-member coordination committee from all EAC countries. The committee formed sub-committees for fundraising, communications, and programs. A total of 10 meetings were held. Preparations adopted a bottom-up approach, beginning with a call for topics shared among committee members. The committee then selected the forum's theme and focus areas, followed by a call for session proposals open to the wider community. Of 28 submissions received, 10 proposals were selected to form the program.

EAIGF 2025 PROCEEDINGS

Day Zero: May 15, 2025

Day Zero of the 2025 EAIGF convened national coordinators and stakeholders from across East Africa to review regional achievements, address ongoing challenges, and foster collaboration for inclusive digital governance. The session highlighted expanding participation to Ethiopia and Somalia, aiming to strengthen the regional network.

Key Outcomes

- Strengthen commitment to regional collaboration, urging National and Regional Initiatives (NRIs) to work together for a secure, effective digital ecosystem and to share best practices and lessons learned.
- Promote inclusive digital governance by ensuring all voices—from established coordinators to new member states—are integrated into regional and global internet governance discussions.
- Proposed a regional initiative for child online protection, emphasizing collective action for digital safety of vulnerable groups.
- Encouraged active stakeholder engagement in shaping future internet governance, with focus areas including digital trade, cybersecurity, and AI governance, and aligning with global processes like IGF renewal and WSIS+20 review.

Main Event: May 16, 2025

Opening Remarks:

Speakers: Rosemary Kimwatu, EAIGF MAG Chair; Dr Grace Githiaga, CEO And Convenor, KICTANET; Anja Gengo, NRI Coordinator, United Nations Internet Governance Forum | Lillian Nalwoga, Convenor, EAIGF

East Africa actively participates in global and regional Internet Governance, influencing policy, promoting digital access, and safeguarding shared internet resources. The region has grown its EAIGF over eight years, establishing initiatives like Schools of IGF to boost capacity and law enforcement integrity. The region continues to hold member states accountable to regional frameworks that promote inclusive and equitable digital access. Each East African nation represents a trusted voice in safeguarding the Internet as a shared resource, and in fostering a respectful, collaborative digital environment. Despite infrastructure challenges, internet accessibility has improved, enhancing financial inclusion and



civic participation through innovations like M-Pesa. With a 48% internet penetration, communities are driving economic empowerment and regional connectivity.

The EAIGF theme "*Advancing East Africa's Digital Governance Together*" underscored collaborative efforts to address challenges such as policy fragmentation, infrastructure gaps, and digital rights threats. Progress includes harmonizing data privacy laws and advancing regional digital payment systems, fostering trust and innovation. The forum's outcomes feed into broader discussions at the Africa and Global IGFs, shaping a resilient, inclusive digital future for East Africa. National Internet Governance Forums (IGFs) serve as foundational pillars in our regional digital ecosystem. They are essential spaces for local dialogue, feeding into regional and global processes.

“Across East Africa, IGFs have catalysed critical policy developments. From Rwanda’s AI policy and Kenya’s digital policy frameworks to cybersecurity and data protection laws, the IGF process has played a pivotal consultative role in shaping these legal instruments. These policies are a testament to the value of inclusive multistakeholder engagement and underline the necessity of institutions such as the School of IGF, which continue to build awareness and capacity in the region.” Lillian Nalwoga, EAIGF Convener

For East Africa to thrive in the digital age, empowering people, maintaining integrity and building trust must remain central to our governance approaches. The threats facing our digital future are not abstract; they are real and impactful, affecting the resilience of governments, civil society, and communities across the region. Through the East Africa IGF, the East African region has made significant progress in aligning legislative processes, most notably through the harmonization of the East Africa Data Privacy Law Bill, which is expected to be tabled at the upcoming East African Summit in November 2025. The drafting of key principles is in advanced stages. Once adopted, this framework will enhance data protection mechanisms in the areas of data processing, utilization, and consumption fostering trust and enabling innovation across sectors such as e-commerce, digital payments, digital health, and more.

National IGFs are not only platforms for dialogue but also critical implementing partners in regional capacity building efforts.” Eng. Murenzi Daniel, *Principal Information Technology Officer for the East African Community (EAC).*

The East African Community is leveraging technology to drive the integration agenda. Harmonization of the East Africa Data Governance and Privacy Law is in progress. Efforts are also underway to advance the EAC Payment Masterplan, which aims to create a more inclusive financial ecosystem. For example, the East African Payment System (EAPS) is helping to reduce the cost of cross-border transactions, while regional payment switches are being harmonized to enable local payments through platforms like M-PESA and other mobile money services within each respective country. Feedback gathered through the IGF including valuable recommendations is being incorporated into ongoing legislative and policy development. This will significantly contribute to the East African Community's (EAC) broader development agenda, including the Proof of Concept (PoC) on digital payments.

High-Level Panel: Advancing East Africa's Digital Governance Together.

Speakers: Mercy Ndegwa, Director of Public Policy, East Africa, Meta | Adam Lane, Deputy CEO, Government Affairs, Kenya, Huawei | Gbenga Ssesan, Executive Director, Paradigm Initiative (PIN) | Hon. Ayobangira Safari, Member of Parliament, Democratic Republic of Congo/Africa Parliamentary Network on Internet Governance (APNIG) | Paul Muriuki Kithinji, Data Policy Advisor, GIZ

Moderator: Dr. Grace Githaiga, CEO, KICTANet..

Session Highlights:

The session highlighted the importance of digital governance for socio-economic transformation in East Africa, emphasizing multi-stakeholder collaboration to address challenges like data protection, cybersecurity, infrastructure costs, and equitable access. Major players, including Meta and Huawei, support inclusive dialogue, responsible innovation, and infrastructure development, despite obstacles such as high costs, geographical barriers, and affordability issues. Key priorities include developing secure communication standards, unlocking underutilized data for innovation, and fostering policies that promote rights, inclusion, and economic growth. Strengthening regional cooperation on data sharing and regulation, building digital skills, and aligning policies with local needs are crucial for sustainable development. Overall, creating supportive regulatory frameworks that encourage investment, and innovation is essential for transforming Africa's digital landscape.



Panel Session 1: Enhancing Global South CSO Capacities in Internet Governance: Engaging, Scaling, and Trust-Building.

Speakers: Angela Minayo – ARTICLE 19; June Okal, ICANN; Florence Awino, KICTANet; Muthuri Kathure, Mozilla Foundation

Moderator: Patricia Ainembabazi, CIPESA

Session Highlights:

The Africa Digital Alliance is actively engaging with regional governments on digital policy development, including AI frameworks and digital rights, emphasizing the importance of capacity building and inclusive governance. International bodies like the ITU and ICANN support these efforts through capacity-building programs, fostering



local leadership and stakeholder participation. Africa must leverage innovation for sustainable growth, regional collaboration, and community-driven solutions, with a focus on digital inclusion, cybersecurity, and content moderation. Big tech companies are advancing digital skills and responsible practices, while policies must prioritize user protection and address issues like misinformation and digital equity. Collaboration with civil society and the private sector is vital, alongside localized policies that reflect African realities, to promote ethical AI, reduce bias, and ensure technology benefits all communities.

Lightning Talk 1: Coalition for Digital Africa. Strengthening Internet Infrastructure and Capacity Across the Continent.

Presenter: Keith Andere

The Coalition for Digital Africa (CDA), led by ICANN, is pivotal in advancing Africa's internet infrastructure and digital capacity through strategic partnerships with governments, academia, and organizations like AFRINIC, ISOC, and ITU. The CDA focuses on building a secure, resilient, and inclusive internet ecosystem, including multilingual access and reliable DNS services across 32 countries. Key initiatives include Universal Acceptance, DNSSEC security, and the rollout of new local gTLDs, which promote localized online identities. Successful outcomes involve improving DNS speed and security, expanding infrastructure, and understanding domain adoption trends. The CDA's collaborative approach aims to close the digital divide, fostering innovation, economic growth, and social inclusion throughout Africa.

Lightning Talk 2: Doubling Down on Cloud Security Fundamentals Against Emerging Threats.

Presenter: Mark Orina, Impact Africa Network

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, cloud computing has become the backbone of many organizations' IT infrastructure, enabling scalability, flexibility, and innovation. However, this increased reliance on cloud services also exposes organizations to a complex and expanding range of cybersecurity threats. This talk highlighted the critical importance of strengthening foundational cloud security principles amid the increasing sophistication of cyber threats such as ransomware, data breaches, and insider attacks. Key areas include implementing strict Identity and Access Management, encrypting data at rest and in transit, ensuring secure cloud configurations, and continuous monitoring with incident response plans. Organizations must adapt to emerging threats like AI-driven attacks and supply chain risks by leveraging threat intelligence and automation. Recognizing the shared responsibility model between providers and users is essential for comprehensive security. Building resilience through ongoing training, testing, and adherence to global standards is vital for maintaining robust cloud defences in today's dynamic threat landscape.

Workshop Session 1: The Next Round of New gTLDs Opportunities in the Digital World.

Presenter: Bob Ochieng, Snr. Director: ngTLD Program, ICANN.

The upcoming new gTLD round offers a major opportunity for stakeholders to expand the domain name space, promote innovation, and strengthen internet branding globally. Since the first launch in 2012, hundreds of new gTLDs have enabled more descriptive and localized online identities. The next application process will include the Applicant Support Program to assist applicants from developing countries, making participation more accessible. Benefits include enhanced branding, cultural representation, increased choice, and potential economic growth. Interested parties, especially in emerging

and underserved regions, should understand eligibility, engage with local governance groups, and stay updated on ICANN's timelines and procedures to maximize the opportunities of this new round.

Workshop Session 2: The People's Network: The Participation of Civil Society Organizations in Digital Public Infrastructure Development in Africa.

Speakers: Mark Mulobi – DIAL; Risper Onyango - DIAL

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are vital for ensuring that Africa's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) is inclusive, rights-based, and community-driven. Their roles include raising awareness about digital identity systems, monitoring implementation especially for marginalized groups, and advocating for participatory, secure, and user-centric design. An example is their collaboration with Kenya on the Huduma Namba program, addressing legal and ethical concerns. In digital payments, CSOs promote fair transaction costs, financial literacy, and responsible usage, while advocating for regulation and inclusion of women. Regarding data exchange systems, CSOs push for strong data protection, transparency, privacy rights, and act as watchdogs to prevent misuse, reinforcing trust in digital ecosystems. In Uganda, CSO coalitions have engaged with authorities on data governance and privacy rights, demonstrating their strategic importance. Overall, integrating CSO participation into DPI planning and oversight is crucial for fostering trust, inclusion, and resilience as Africa advances its digital transformation.

EAIGF 2025 Forum Recommendations

STRENGTHEN REGIONAL COLLABORATION ON INTERNET POLICY AND REGULATION

- Foster harmonized policies on data protection, digital ID, and roaming across East African Community (EAC) member states
- Promote cross-border digital governance frameworks to facilitate smoother data sharing, cybersecurity protocols, and policy alignment.

ENHANCE INTERNET INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESSIBILITY

- Invest in affordable and inclusive connectivity, especially in rural and underserved regions.
- Expand support for community networks and public-private partnerships to improve internet infrastructure.
- Prioritize infrastructure resilience, addressing power supply and terrain-related challenges for broader coverage.

ACCELERATE DIGITAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Scale up digital literacy programs targeting most vulnerable groups – including youth, women, and marginalized communities across the region.
- Encourage capacity building through partnerships with academia, civil society, and tech companies to support participation in the digital economy.

DEEPEN CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE (DPI)

- Institutionalize early involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs) in DPI design and implementation, including digital ID, digital payments, and data exchanges.
- Create formal spaces for multistakeholder consultations to ensure rights-based, inclusive digital ecosystems.

IMPROVE CYBERSECURITY READINESS AND TRUST

- Encourage member states to develop or update national cybersecurity strategies in line with regional frameworks.
- Promote cloud security fundamentals and responsible platform accountability practices to combat emerging digital threats.
- Strengthen user awareness on privacy, digital safety, and responsible digital behavior.

SUPPORT EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING

- Invest in regional research and data collection to inform digital policy and track progress.
- Encourage the publication and use of open data by governments and stakeholders to foster transparency and accountability.

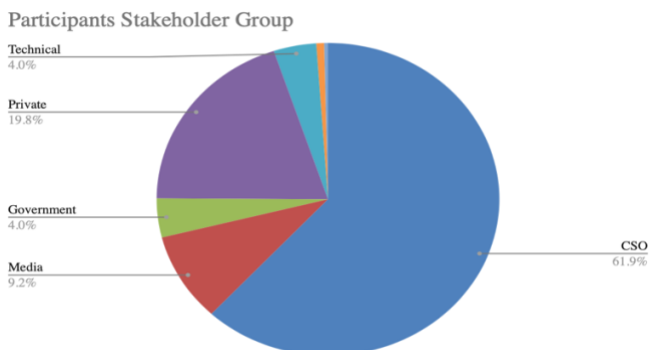
EMPOWER YOUTH AND MARGINALIZED VOICES

- Ensure youth participation in Internet Governance discussions and leadership programs across East Africa.
- Provide funding and mentorship opportunities to grassroots organizations and innovators focused on digital rights and access.

Conclusion

This forum demonstrated, that multi-stakeholderism is not just a principle, it is a necessity. The path to a trusted, open, secure, and inclusive internet in East Africa will only be possible if governments, civil society, academia, the private sector, the technical community, and importantly our youth continue to work side by side. The East Africa Internet Governance Forum (EAIGF) 2025 was a pivotal platform for fostering multistakeholder dialogue on the future of digital governance across the East African region. Bringing together policymakers, civil society, academia, private sector actors, youth, and technical communities, the Forum underscored the region’s collective resolve to shape a secure, inclusive, and innovative digital ecosystem.

EAIGF2025 Participants



Media:

Website:

www.eaigf.africa

Event

livestream:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q635SqKbJkc> | **social media:** #EAIGF2025

https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipNtotepadjTPy58aPl4KyahTBbyGswze9EjyEvz5cs_3xyuSnUXuQ7_qZoJJTYUog?key=OUdoNmtfczdVR0xHVC1IRjFRQVdvtduTk9qajlB

Organising Committee

Name	Country	Stakeholder group
Lillian Nalwoga	Uganda	Civil Society
Eng. Daniel Murenzi	Rwanda	Government
Arsene Tungali	DRC	Civil Society
Jesse Nathan Kalenge	Uganda	Private Sector
Robert Ford Nkusi	Rwanda	Private Sector
Denaya Dennis	South Sudan	Civil Society
Joshua Mpairwe	Uganda	Private sector
Dr. Grace Githaiga	Kenya	Civil Society
Nazar Kirama	Tanzania	Civil Society
Keith Andere	Kenya	Civil Society
Rosemary Koech	Kenya	Private sector (EAIGF 2025 MAG Chair)
Barrack Otieno	Kenya	Technical sector
Jean Paul Nkurunziza	Burundi	Civil Society
Millenium Anthony	Tanzania	Civil Society
David Indeje	Kenya	Civil Society

Rapporteurs: Emmanuel Oruk, Uganda IGF; Yasmin Ahmed, Uganda IGF; Sheila Kakooza, Uganda IG; Stacy Ayoo Owango, Kenya IGF

Finacial Statement:

ActivityDescription	Budget	Expense
Travel	40,000	25,000
Venue hire and meals	23,000	20,000
Documentation (rapporteurs)	1,000	1,000
Documentation - IEC materials, programme printing, banners etc	3,000	2,000
Livestreaming	2,000	1,000
Photography and videography	1,000	1,000
Total	70,000	50,000

EAIGF Partners

