



Lesotho Internet Governance Forum (LesIGF) 2024 Report

Introduction

The Lesotho Internet Governance Forum (LesIGF) 2024 was held on July 11-12, 2024, at Lancer's Inn in Maseru. Organized by the Ministry of Information, Communications, Science and Technology (MICSTI), the Lesotho Communications Authority (LCA), and the Internet Society (ISOC) Lesotho Chapter, the forum brought together diverse stakeholders to discuss critical issues shaping the digital landscape of Lesotho. The theme for this year's forum was "Building Lesotho's Multistakeholder Digital Future: Aligning with Global Trends."

Objectives

The primary objectives of LesIGF 2024 were to:

- Facilitate discussions on key Internet governance challenges and opportunities relevant to Lesotho.
- Develop consensus-based recommendations for policy development and implementation.
- Foster collaboration among stakeholders to advance Lesotho's digital future.

Day 1: Thursday, 11th July 2024

Opening Session

- **Registration:** Participants registered from 08:30 to 09:00.
- **Official Opening:** The forum was officially opened with introductory remarks by MC Mr. Rapitso Rapitso (LTV), followed by addresses from the Internet Society/IGF Coordinator Mr Letsatsi Lekhooa and Mr. Goolam from LCA.
- **Opening Address:** The Minister of Communications, Science and Technology delivered the opening address, emphasizing the importance of multistakeholder in Internet governance.
- **Keynote Address:** Mrs Mabafokeng Seala from Lesotho National for UNESCO spoke on the significance of multistakeholder and the IGF.

Theme 1: Harnessing Innovation and Balancing Risks in the Digital Space

- **Presentation:** Mr. Sello presented on “Leveraging Digital Innovation for Sustainable Growth in Lesotho,” highlighting the balance between technological progress and protection.

Theme 2: Enhancing the Digital Contribution to Peace, Development, and Sustainability

- **Presentation:** Ms. Mathokoane Tlali discussed “Cyber Diplomacy: Building Alliances and Safeguards for a Thriving Digital Economy.”

Interactive Labs

- Ministry of Agriculture showcased AI driven project they are still developing and participants we interested in the project and encouraged the developer to make more research on machine learning.

Panel discussions The discussions then went into panels and presentations where different field experts delved into the different set topics as stated hereunder with the following as issues arising thereof:	
Session 1 Topic: <i>Advancing Human Rights and Inclusion: The Experiences of people with disabilities in accessing Digital Services in Lesotho</i> Moderator: Mr Thabiso Masenyetsa Panelists: Mr Talasi, ‘Masetlaba Min Education (Special Unit Inclusion) Matters arising: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Barriers and limitations	Session 2 Topic: <i>Keeping Pace with Technology- Are Policy and Regulation in Lesotho Adapting to Advances in Transformative Technologies such as AI, IoT, and Blockchain?</i> Moderator: Mr Lebeko Sello Matters arising: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1976, Steve Wonder paid for an assistive device• 1999• 2005

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These barriers including infrastructure, resources, • These barriers affecting the education system in form of skills development, access to internet, assistive devices which softwares are needed. Ministry being unable to afford such softwares. Not being admitted in institutions of higher learning. • <p>Access and Capacity was raised -design being amongst other things</p> <p><i>How do these barrier impact daily living for the disabled? And what initiatives are being taken to solve them?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having to rely on others people • Not knowing policies and laws being implemented by the government. • Achievements include high enrolment of disabled students in NUL. Such students, however, have little access to Expense in purchasing assistive devices and software's. Lack of participation. NUL has advocacy. • LDTC programme under Min Education for inclusive education. After 2020, learning management system was made. Hosting sometimes remains a challenge due to limitations. • LNS manual, although there still constraints. • Supplementary manual for ICT policy in draft • Awareness raising for those catching up on disabled. <p>EFFORTS: Capacity building to teachers None formal education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2008 • Stressed the importance of coherence between government Ministries. • Inclusive regulations by default and services including digital by design, inclusive by design, secure by design, once only
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons with Disability Equity Act • National Human Rights Commission should be made. <p>IMPROVEMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devices and software • Cyber security • Drafted ICT policy • Increased enrollment • Now students are now able to select the subjects they want to take, without being limited due to their impairment. 	
<p>Session 3</p> <p>Topic: Keeping Pace with Technology Moderator: Monaheng Liaho LP/ ISOS Panelists: Mpho Thaabe Tumane Mahloane LCA (ICT) Tlhaloso Mpopo: NUL Center for Technology and Learning Nkhasi Mpoi: Vodacom Lesotho Relebohile Ferete Econet Telecom Lesotho</p> <p>POINTS RAISED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration amongst stakeholders for inclusion and accessibility • Online safety Act in UN and Digital Safety Act proposed to be implemented. • Absence of data protection Commission in response to Data Protection Act of 2011 • Vandalism of equipment <p>Matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth advocates • Digital Literacy being one of the challenges in Lesotho 3G coverage is • Internet based curriculum suggestion • BTS's by the LCA, 	<p>Session 4</p> <p>Topic: Freedom of Expression, Artificial Intelligence- Protecting Democracy in the Digital Age</p> <p>Moderator: Ms Mabatho Lithebe LNBS</p> <p>Points raised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI • Misinformation and disinformation on the internet • Propaganda • Limits to freedom of expression <p>PEPSI Track in news fact checking and verification Automated AI for public service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying data threats •

<p>Session 5</p> <p>Topic: The Role of regulation in promoting digitalisation in Lesotho. Perspectives</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <p>Points raised</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy of LCA as a regulatory body • Mission in the next three years: • Adaptability for implementation for service delivery • Focus area: Transformation in tech and innovations • Priorities: consumer protection, • Policies as a state owned entities • Cybersecurity • Transformation from paper based • Accelerate the digital transformation • Financial sustainability • Safeguard consumer rights, • LCA's values: transparency, security, innovations 	<p>Session 6</p> <p>Topic:</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • youth from a broader spectrum and not just those in the urban areas • Authorities must mandate that all development projects an initiatives (such as tenders) include a significant youth participation at all times • The language barrier should be broken down to ensure an all-inclusive action plan • Youth must refrain from the entitlement mentality and always be willing to get hands dirty for national development <p>Take away points:</p>

<p>Take away notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satellite transformation • Collaborative efforts for communications (businesses also in the purpose of tax payment and contribution to economy) <p>- “If it is not green, it’ll run out of life soon. If it’s not digital, it doesn’t exist in the future”</p> <p>-Tech has a lot of possibilities</p> <p>- Digitalise paper through Ai, also measuring inputs for a lot of uses including agriculture applications to increase yield to lower costs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data management and security being very crucial throughout the digitisation process • Systems must at all times be put in place to facilitate for the participation of youth and women for national development • There is fundamental value in promulgation of laws highlighting cybersecurity • Basotho women should be more than ready to be part of the global agenda for data management and being cyber-savvy • Youth are especially very central to the notion of efficiency of evolution to a clean and prosperous energy production and technological future in Lesotho
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Summary:

Need for collaboration

Implementation of policies and laws to govern the online communities

Rapporteurs: Tseviso Serabele

