South African
Internet Governance Forum
ZAIGF

Internet Governance Forum 2024 Report

communications
& digital technologies
Department:
Communications & Digital Technologies
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

.zadna
Domain Name Authority

Google

ZAIGF Opening Address:

Chairperson of ZA Domain Name Authority
Ms Palesa Legoze

The South African Internet Governance Forum (ZAIGF) is an annual event that serves as a unique platform for fostering multistakeholder dialogue on key public policy issues related to the Internet. Rooted in the principles outlined by the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was established to bring together diverse voices from business, governments, the Internet technical community, and civil society. ZAIGF continues this tradition of open and inclusive dialogue, providing an equal footing for all participants.

Since its inception, the ZAIGF has played a vital role in advancing these discussions within the national context. The ZAIGF co-convened by the ZAIGF Multi-Stakeholder Committee, the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT), and the Domain Name Authority (ZADNA), set a precedent for fruitful and substantive conversations.

Previous editions of ZAIGF were hosted in Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, and Limpopo, and have witnessed engaging discussions in main sessions. These sessions have attracted diverse delegates from the Internet technical community, civil society, government officials, international development actors, academics, individual Internet users, and business communities.

The overarching theme encapsulated the comprehensive exploration of the Internet Governance pillar: infrastructure, cybersecurity, human rights, legal and regulatory, economic development, and socio-cultural.

Building on the success of previous forums, the 2024 ZAIGF aims to continue fostering collaboration and understanding among stakeholders. The forum will discuss pressing issues in the ever-evolving landscape of Internet governance, exploring topics that shape the digital future of South Africa.

The overarching theme for ZAIGF 24 will be carefully chosen to reflect the contemporary challenges and opportunities in the digital realm.

ZAIGF 24 represents a continuation of the commitment to fostering an inclusive, secure, and innovative digital future for South Africa. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, the forum aims to generate insights, identify best practices, and contribute to the formulation of policies that address the complex challenges and opportunities in the digital realm. Through open and collaborative discussions, ZAIGF 24 will play a crucial role in shaping the future of Internet governance in South Africa.

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ZAIGF 2024 Statistics

EVENT DETAILS

28 Feb – 01 March 2024 University of Johannesburg South Africa
+ONLINE

REGISTRATIONS & ATTENDEES

170 Registrations
59 Onsite Participants

70 Attendees
11 Online Participants

THEMATIC AREAS

- Emerging Technologies & Innovation
- Economic Issues & Development
- Universal Access & Connectivity
- Data Governance
- Rights & Freedom
- Media & Content

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

5 paper Presentations 8 panel Discussions

Keynote Address: Deputy Minister of Communication and Digital Technologies, Hon. Philly Mapulane

The South African Internet Governance Forum (ZAIGF) serves as a vital platform for stakeholders to assess our progress in fostering an inclusive, secure, and innovative digital future for South Africa. It underscores our commitment to safeguarding our nation's sovereignty in the digital realm.

The South African Internet Governance Forum (ZAIGF) occupies a central role in our nation's digital landscape. The internet's importance in propelling South Africa's advancement across sectors such as commerce, education, health- care, governance, and entertainment cannot be overstated.

Since 2012, internet access has been recognized as a fundamental human right, aligning with the United Nations Human Rights Council's affirmation of individuals' freedom of expression and opinion.

Sustaining internet access and cultivating a robust and secure digital infrastructure demand collaborative efforts from diverse stakeholders. Governmental bodies, private enterprises, civil society organizations, technical experts, and academic institutions must actively participate in shaping policies and strategies for managing South Africa's Internet ecosystem. The multi-stakeholder approach emerges as a fitting model for Internet Governance, fostering ongoing development and broader applicability in digitalngovernance realms.

However, embracing a multi-stakeholder approach presents its own set of challenges. These processes can be intricate and time consuming, potentially susceptible to influence from vested interests. Moreover, existing mechanisms often address only a fraction of the multifaceted challenges arising from the widespread adoption of the Internet, leading to fragmented solutions lacking input from all relevant stakeholders.

Nonetheless, the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies remains steadfast in fostering multi-stakeholder dialogues on Internet Governance. We recognize an open, secure, and nationally interoperable Internet

as pivotal to driving social and economic progress. As internet usage surges, the ZAIGF retains its strategic and economic significance, serving as a forum to address critical issues such as privacy, and data governance, combatting illicit content, tackling misinformation, and navigating the implications of emerging technologies. Approach- ing the 20-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20), the ZAIGF provides a platform for reflection on leveraging multi-stakeholder, people-centered, inclusive, development-oriented, and non-discriminatory models to tackle internet governance challenges.

In 2022, Statistics South Africa conducted the country's first digital Census, confirming our transition into the digital era. The results,

released in October 2023, indicated a commendable advance in internet penetration, aligning with the technology goals of the National Development Plan. With internet pene- tration reaching 78.9% in 2022, we stand at the cusp of surpassing NDP targets and connecting 100% of South Africans by 2030.

This achievement places South Africa at the forefront of internet penetration and freedom on the continent, empowering us to bridge the digital gap and contribute to global efforts to connect the unconnected. Yet, with increased internet penetration comes heightened vulnerabilities to cyber threats. Cybercrime poses a significant challenge, targeting businesses and individuals alike. The Cybersecurity threat landscape is evolving rapidly, characterized by the sophistication and scale

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of threat actors. In response, the Department has established a Cybersecurity Hub to coordinate efforts in the private sector and civil society, bolstering our national cyber resilience.

Digital literacy plays a pivotal role in empowering users to navigate the online world safely. It equips individuals with the skills to discern credible information, recognize cyber threats, and engage effectively in the digital economy. Educational institutions must integrate digital literacy into their curricula to ensure all students have the opportunity to develop these essential skills. Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents both opportunities and challenges in addressing digital disparities. It has the potential to alleviate existing inequalities while also posing risks such as job displacement.

To harness AI's benefits, the Department is collaborating with academic institutions to establish AI Hubs, preparing our workforce for an AI-centric future.

Building resilient internet infrastructure is crucial for withstanding various challenges, including natural disasters and cyberattacks. Investment in redundant network architectures and emerging technologies is essential for enhancing internet resilience.

As the 6th administration, we remain committed to fostering South Africa's internet growth through multi-stakeholder collaboration,

safety, and resilience. Through initiatives like SA Connect, we aim to bridge the digital divide and achieve a digitally inclusive society.

I wish you all fruitful engagements at this 8th installment of the forum and a successful conference. Together, let us continue our journey towards a prosperous and inclusive digital future for South Africa.

Thank you.

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Foreword of the Chairperson of the ZAIGF Multi-Stakeholder Committee:
Ms Latty Thlaka

The ZAIGF stands as a crucial platform, embodying a multi-stakeholder approach that unites diverse voices to inform policymakers and address the complex challenges and opportunities of our digital era. Built upon the foundation of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), established by the United Nations in 2006, ZAIGF upholds the principles of openness, inclusivity, and collaboration.

In South Africa, we are witnessing a growing awareness and appreciation of the importance of platforms like the ZAIGF, with increasing participation and inclusivity from stakeholders across the spectrum. This growth reflects our nation's commitment to engaging in global discourse and shaping the future of Internet Governance.

Aligned with this year's overarching theme of the UN IGF, "Building our Multistakeholder Digital Future," ZAIGF remains steadfast in advancing the principles of multi-stakeholderism. This resonates deeply with our mission, emphasizing the pivotal role of collective action in shaping the digital landscape.

In our discussions during ZAIGF 2024, subjects such as Artificial Intelligence, Innovation, the Internet of Things, cybersecurity, connectivity, inclusivity, digital governance, and human rights emerged as focal points.

Notably, emerging technologies and cybersecurity garnered significant attention, highlighting the imperative of staying abreast of advancements while mitigating evolving cyber threats.

Despite these discussions, the persistent challenge of ensuring connectivity and inclusion for underserved communities remains paramount.

In South Africa, as emphasized during the 2024 forum, addressing the digital divide and empowering marginalized communities are critical imperatives.

The digital divide continues to impede access to essential services, hindering economic and

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social development. Thus, collaborative efforts across sectors are essential to bridge this gap, expand access, and empower communities through digital inclusion initiatives.

As we present this report, we are excited about the insights and recommendations it contains.

We believe it will serve as a valuable resource for informing policy, guiding action, and fostering greater collaboration in our collective efforts to navigate the complexities of the digital age.

South Africa In Internet Governance Forum (ZAIGF)

The South African Governance Forum (ZAGF) convened over two days, spotlighting digital inclusion and security challenges within South Africa. Panelists stressed the necessity of collaborative efforts across multiple stakeholders. Day one centered on practical STEM education, escalating cybersecurity risks, and AI's potential for job creation. Insights from speakers like Mark Elkins delved into career growth and South Africa's early internet days, highlighting concerns regarding IP address allocation.

Other discussions included digital safety's paramountcy, especially concerning the 2024 elections. Speakers emphasized a comprehensive strategy to combat disinformation and safeguard internet access as a human right. They also tackled challenges surrounding online safety and content regulation, advocating for government-industry-citizen collaboration. Additionally, they explored the right to be forgotten, balancing online content regulation with freedom of expression and public safety concerns. Finally, the opportunities and hurdles in South Africa's digital transformation, including inclusivity and government interventions to bridge connectivity disparities, were examined.

Day two delved into the future of South Africa's internet, focusing on boosting internet penetration, bridging connectivity gaps, and ensuring data adequacy. Presenters emphasized indigenous knowledge's relevance amidst technological advancements and stressed the importance of regulatory frameworks, skills enhancement, and collaborative efforts for ethical and inclusive AI integration. Empowering youth through education and community involvement was advocated, with a plea for knowledge exchange, financial backing, and networking avenues to propel the sector forward.

ZAIGF Paper Presentation: Journey Through South Africa's Internet Landscape: Histories to DNS Innovations

Presenter: Mr Mark Elkins, Founder and CEO of Posix Systems

The paper presentation began with a shift in focus due to political reasons, leading the speaker to share their personal journey from their beginnings in the tech world to their current involvement in DNS and Internet infrastructure. Mark Elkins recounted his entry into the field, starting with his introduction to Unix at

at Queen Mary College, London, and his move to South Africa in 1983. He reminisced about purchasing his first modem from Dimension Data, which later grew into a major corporation.

Elkins discussed his involvement in pioneering internet connectivity in South Africa, including his contributions to the .za domain system and the implementation of TCP/IP networking.

He highlighted the growth and democratization of domain registration through initiatives like co.za, which he helped automate and manage, making it accessible and affordable.

He touched upon his role in managing the edu.za domain registry for tertiary educational institutions and his passion for DNS security, emphasizing the importance of security in online systems.

Elkins also showcased the DNS training program he co-presents, aimed at uplifting individuals interested in domain management.

Additionally, he introduced the Observatory, a project monitoring internet usage in South Africa, demonstrating its capabilities in tracking domain growth and DNS security adoption.

Elkins concluded by encouraging audience engagement and fielding questions, including one about the challenges faced by ISPs in acquiring IP addresses.

Paper Presentation: Humanising Digital Innovations through Indigenous Knowledge

Presenter: Dr. Fikile Mnisi, Founder and Managing Director of Khanca (Pty) Ltd

In the presentation, Dr. Fikile Mnisi the founder and Managing Director of of Khaca, delved into the importance of incorporating indigenous knowledge systems into the development and implementation of digital technologies, particularly in the African context. Drawing on her expertise and passion for indigenous knowledge systems, Dr. Mnisi emphasized the profound significance of integrating indigenous perspectives into the development and implementation of digital technologies, particularly within the African context.

Drawing on her expertise and passion for indigenous knowledge systems, Dr. Mnisi emphasized the profound significance of integrating indigenous perspectives into the development and implementation of digital technologies, particularly within the African context. She underscored the importance of recognizing and honoring the diverse cultural heritage embedded within African communities.

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Dr. Mnisi painted a vivid picture of indigenous knowledge as a repository of ancient wisdom, encompassing insights, practices, and values passed down through generations. She articulated the holistic nature of indigenous knowledge, which integrates social, cultural, and ecological dimensions in a tapestry of interconnectedness. As she delved deeper into her discourse, Dr. Mnisi shone a spotlight on the challenges facing indigenous knowledge, including marginalization, appropriation, and erosion in the face of globalization. Yet, she highlights the transformative potential of digital technologies in preserving, revitalizing, and empowering indigenous communities.

Dr. Mnisi outlined concrete strategies for integrating indigenous knowledge into digital innovation processes. She speaks of co-creation and collaboration, emphasizing the importance of engaging indigenous communities as active partners in technological development.

During the Q&A session, attendees engage with Dr. Mnisi on topics such as benefit-sharing agreements, cultural preservation, and the integration of indigenous knowledge with modern technology. Her responses underscore the importance of community involvement and ongoing dialogue. Throughout her presentation, Dr. Mnisi weaved together anecdotes, examples, and insights, painting a compelling narrative of the symbiotic relationship between indigenous wisdom and digital innovation.

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ZAIGF Paper Presentation:
AI and Data Governance: Adequacy Implications for Internet Governance

Presenter: Adv. Nandipha Ntsaluba, Member of the ZAIGF Multi-Stakeholder Committee

Adv. Ntsaluba delved into the intricate relationship between data adequacy, AI governance, and Africa's burgeoning ambition in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). She elucidated the origins of data adequacy regulations, tracing back to the EU Directive and its evolution into GDPR. The discourse highlighted South Africa's adoption of privacy laws based on the EU Directive and the implications for data transfers within and outside the EU. Adv. Ntsaluba underscored the importance of understanding GDPR's provisions and their relevance to AI governance. Transitioning to the realm of AI governance, the discourse examined the implications of GDPR and data adequacy regulations on AI development and deployment. The presenter explored the challenges posed by the Privacy Shield and the Ireland Facebook case, emphasizing the need for stringent measures to ensure data protection in AI applications. Shifting focus to Africa's AI ambition, Adv. Ntsaluba delved into the AU AI foresight and ambition, comprising five strategic pillars aimed at fostering human capital development, infrastructure, enabling environments, AI economy, and sustainable partnerships.

She underscored the need for Africa to assert its role in shaping AI governance and innovation. The discourse addressed concerns surrounding generative AI, highlighting the need for proactive regulation and collaboration between legal experts and technologists.

Adv. Ntsaluba advocated for a balanced approach to AI governance, emphasizing the importance of organizational readiness and risk management in the face of evolving technologies.

In conclusion, Adv. Ntsaluba underscored the importance of proactive engagement with AI governance and data adequacy regulations in Africa's journey towards technological ad- vancement.

The presentation advocated for collaborative efforts to align regulatory frameworks with Africa's AI ambition, ensuring responsible innovation and safeguarding against potential risks.

During the Q&A session, further exploration of the implications of relying on AI pioneers like Elon Musk and the necessity for proactive regulation in the face of emerging technologies took place.

Adv. Ntsaluba emphasized the role of interdisciplinary collaboration and the need for African stakeholders to assert their influence in shaping AI governance frameworks.

In closing, Adv. Ntsaluba reiterated the importance of collaboration, innovation, and informed regulation in navigating the complexities of AI governance and data adequacy. She encouraged stakeholders to embrace Africa's AI ambition while addressing the ethical and legal challenges inherent in AI development and deployment.

Session Panel One: Advancing Digital Safety during the 2024 Elections

The panel session, led by Ms. Bonolo Makgale, focused on advancing digital safety ahead of the 2024 elections. Panelists included representatives from various sectors, such as Ephraim Tlhako from the Film and Publications Board, Nomshado Lubisi from Media Monitoring Africa, and Abongile Mashele and Duduetsang Makuse representing Google and META - SADC respectively.

Ms. Makgale highlighted the global importance of the elections and the challenges related to democratic deficits and political dissatisfaction, particularly in South Africa. The discussion centered on digital democracy and citizen engagement online, addressing issues such as disinformation and misinformation. Emphasis was placed on empowering citizens to navigate information overload, with initiatives like Real411 being highlighted.

Distinctions between misinformation and disinformation were discussed, along with challenges in regulating speech while ensuring freedom of expression. Meta's approach to content moderation, Google's efforts in surfacing authoritative information during elections, and the evolving relationship between tech companies and government were key topics.

The Film and Publications Board's role in regulating online content, especially to protect users, was outlined, as were civil society initiatives like Real411 and the Elections Disinformation Working Group. Meta's approach to combating misinformation and disinformation, as well as Google's efforts in data privacy protection and support for political leaders, were discussed.

The critical balance between freedom of expression and regulating harmful content online, particularly during elections, was highlighted. Collaboration between regulatory bodies, tech companies, civil society, and government agencies was emphasized as essential for addressing online safety challenges. Technological advancements, including AI, present both opportunities and challenges in combating misinformation.

Education and awareness were noted as crucial in building resilience against online harm, with an emphasis on empowering individuals to discern credible information and engage responsibly. Ultimately, the importance of civic participation in the democratic process and collective action in safeguarding democratic values was emphasized.

Session Panel Two:
Navigating the Right to be Forgotten: Balancing Privacy and Expression in the Digital Age

Latty Thlaka, the Chairperson of the ZAIGF Multi-Stakeholder Committee, was moderating the session and introduced panelists who would discuss the topic of navigating the right to be forgotten and balancing privacy and expression in the digital age.

Panelists included representatives from various organizations such as Mr Takalani Muvhali from the Information Regulator of South Africa, Adv. Lerato Seema from the .za Domain Name Authority, Mr Lucien Pierce from Phukubje Pierce Masithela Attorneys Inc, and Dr. Mashilo Boloka from the Film and Publication Board. Each panellist introduced themselves and provided insights into the topic at hand, highlighting legal frameworks, regulatory challenges, and the importance of balancing privacy rights with freedom of expression.

The discussion seemed to revolve around the complexities of implementing the right to be forgotten, drawing from both international examples (such as the European Union) and South African

legislation. Thlaka moderated the discussion, posing questions to panelists and fostering dialogue on topics like privacy boundaries, public interest, and the challenges faced in regulating online content.

A notable moment occurred when a participant raised a concern about gender diversity on the panel, prompting a disclaimer from one of the panelists who expressed their non-consent to having photos distributed on social media.

This acknowledgment of the issue was followed by a discussion led by a representative from the Information Regulator of South Africa, who emphasized the importance of balancing privacy rights with access to information, citing relevant legal precedents and mandates.

The event concluded with a Q&A session, where participants raised important questions about safety concerns, content monitoring effi- ciency, and photographers' privacy concerns. Panelists addressed these questions, providing insights and perspectives from their respective areas of expertise.

Overall, the event seemed to be a valuable platform for discussing crucial issues related to internet governance, privacy rights, and the challenges of regulating online content in South Africa's digital landscape.

Session Panel Three: Connecting the Unconnected, and Government Initiatives for Affordable Connectivity in Remote Communities

The session delved into the challenges and initiatives surrounding the connection of underserved communities and the pursuit of affordable connectivity. Ms. Refilwe Segopa, the panel moderator, underscored the significance of inclusivity within connectivity endeavors. Government initiatives such as the National Integrated ICT White Paper and the NDP's objective of achieving universal infrastructure access by 2030 were discussed.

Panelists like Mr. Kopano Ramashala emphasized the necessity of community networks and highlighted the hurdles in accessing government assistance. Ms. Zine Nkukwana shed light on the practicalities of working in rural areas and the gap between policy formulation and implementation. Ms. Irisha Luhanga shared insights into youth upskilling efforts and the obstacles faced by entrepreneurs, emphasizing the importance of enhanced coordination and stakeholder support.

Samantha, representing the ITU, stressed the significance of synchronized efforts, policy coherence, and sustainable financing to effectively bridge the digital divide.

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The discourse uncovered challenges such as insufficient government backing, inadequate stakeholder coordination, and the imperative for innovative approaches to education and skills enhancement. Panelists underscored the urgent need to address these issues to ensure equitable digital access and stimulate entrepreneurship in marginalized communities.

From discussions on entrepreneurship within unconventional settings like c-Max prison to tackling the complexities of rural connectivity and governmental responsibility, the session encompassed a broad spectrum of topics. Noteworthy initiatives like Digital Africa, aimed at narrowing the digital divide and empowering communities through technology, were highlighted. The raised points regarding internet access as a fundamental right, the primacy of actionable solutions, and the call for genuine governmental support in rural areas are pivotal in the contemporary digital landscape. The determination and passion exhibited by individuals striving for positive change amidst adversity are commendable.

In conclusion, there exists a consensus on the imperative for tangible action and accountability rather than mere rhetoric. It is hoped that endeavors such as Digital Africa and ongoing research endeavors will contribute substantially to addressing these multifaceted challenges and effecting meaningful progress.

Session Panel Four: The AI We Want: Design, Regulations, and Harmonisation

The session, moderated by Mr. Tato Moeng, delved into the nuanced landscape of AI regulation and harmonization. While focusing on South Africa's context, the discussion acknowledged the country's reliance on imported AI technologies and the historical applications of AI across various sectors, challenging perceptions of urban concentration. Panellist Paul Hjul emphasized AI's long-standing concepts, highlighting recent prominence due to computing advancements. He noted a disconnect between abstract research and practical industry applications, advocating for more collaboration with academic research rather than relying solely on tech companies' products.

Responding to inquiries about AI's readiness and hype, Malizo Magangane traced its evolution from analytics to AI, stressing the importance of practical utility in technology adoption. She distinguished between automation and AI, underlining AI's predictive capabilities and ethical concerns regarding data usage. Overall, the discussion underscored AI's historical context, its applications in South Africa, and the ethical imperatives guiding its adoption and implementation. It revealed a consensus on the need for regulations that align with local values, ensuring technology serves societal goals while safeguarding human rights and wellbeing.

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Session Panel Five:
Unleashing Economic Potential, Navigating the Impact of AI on Jobs, Governance and Growth in South Africa

The session, led by moderator Ms. Latty Thlaka, delved into unlocking South Africa's economic potential amidst the evolving landscape of AI's impact on jobs, governance, and growth. The panel featured insights from Mr. Lucien Pierce, Mr. Sipho Ngobeni, Professor Sizwe Snail Ka Mtuze, and Advocate Dennis

Ramphomane, with Mr. Sipho Mthombeni contributing online. Advocate Dennis underscored the necessity of training programs to empower youth with AI skills and lamented the absence of a cohesive African narrative on AI policies. Mr. Ngobeni highlighted the economic opportunities in sectors like ICT and agriculture through AI adoption, particularly in cybersecurity and predictive modeling.

Professor Mtuze explored AI's implications on tax collection, employment, and entrepreneurship, stressing the need for adaptation and skill diversification. Mr. Pierce tackled legal considerations for fair employment practices amidst AI advancements, advocating for regulations to safeguard workers affected by technological shifts. Mr. Mthombeni introduced the Digital Sprinters Framework,

focusing on physical and human capital, technology adoption, and competitiveness to drive digitalizationled economic growth.

Mark Elkins shared his immigration story to South Africa, shedding light on job sector protection and the looming impact of AI and technology on employment.

The discourse expanded to AI's role across industries, including insurance, and its potential effects on youth employment rates.

Participants emphasized the imperative of upskilling to navigate technological shifts and advocated for infrastructure development, particularly in remote areas.

Mental health implications of job displacement were highlighted, alongside concerns about AI's encroachment on human jobs, especially in service sectors.

Addressing the development of AI, the need for responsible governance and ethical considerations, particularly in labor law, was stressed.

Calls were made for collaboration and knowledge-sharing to empower youth for meaningful participation in the digital economy.

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Foreword: Acting Director-General of the Department of Communication and Digital Technologies, Mr. Mlindi Mashologu

In our dynamic era, defined by the rapid advancement of technology, we find ourselves at the nexus of unprecedented innovation and profound societal change. As we navigate the intricate landscape of emerging technologies, it becomes increasingly evident that our collective journey into the digital future requires a thoughtful and collaborative approach.

Artificial intelligence, blockchain, the Internet of Things, and their counterparts hold the transformative potential to revolutionize industries, redefine business models, and enrich our quality of life. Yet, amidst the boundless opportunities they offer, we encounter an array of challenges that demand our attention. Privacy, security, and ethical considerations loom large as we seek to harness the full potential of these technologies while mitigating risks and safeguarding against abuses.

For me, this journey is not just professional but also deeply personal. Having started my career in engineering, I've traversed diverse paths to arrive at the intersection of technology and future studies. As a student pursuing an MPhil, I find myself engrossed in exploring the implications of generative AI within the digital government ecosystem.

This research endeavor underscores the critical importance of ethical innovation in shaping our collective future.

Central to our discussions is the imperative of digital inclusion. While the digital realm has the power to empower and unite, we must not overlook the stark reality of the digital divide. Millions around the globe still lack access to basic digital tools, perpetuating inequalities and marginalizing vulnerable communities. Bridging this gap requires concerted efforts, from investing in digital infrastructure to promoting digital literacy and fostering innovation in underserved regions.

In our pursuit of a thriving digital economy, we must harness the potential of transformative technology applications, fiscal innovation,

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digital trade services, and platforms. It's time to empower our youth to become creators, not just consumers, of digital solutions, ensuring that the benefits of innovation are shared equitably.

Moreover, as we embrace the opportunities of the digital age, we cannot afford to overlook the paramount importance of digital safety and cybersecurity. The proliferation of cyber threats underscores the need for a comprehensive approach encompassing awareness campaigns, robust infrastructure, effective legislation, and international cooperation.

The Internet Governance Forum serves as a critical platform for dialogue and collaboration, bringing together stakeholders from all sectors to chart a course toward a more prosperous, equitable, and inclusive digital society. As we embark on these deliberations, let us remain mindful of our collective responsibility to shape policies that safeguard the rights and freedoms of all Internet users.

In conclusion, I extend my gratitude to all participants for their contributions to this vital dialogue. Together, let us forge a path forward that embraces the transformative potential of technology while upholding our shared values and aspirations.

Thank you, and may our collective efforts pave the way for a brighter digital future.

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The SA Youth IGF aims to empower young individuals with the knowledge and opportunities to influence the policies shaping our digital future.

This year's forum has been a resounding success, characterized by vibrant discussions and thought-provoking debates. Our young delegates have made inspiring and impactful contributions, addressing critical digital issues and proposing forward-thinking solutions.

Our ambitions extend beyond national dialogue; we are committed to ensuring South African youth voices are heard globally. We are preparing a comprehensive position paper for the global IGF in Saudi Arabia, advocating for policies that prioritize digital inclusivity, accessibility, and security.

Youth participation in forums like the IGF is essential for developing robust and forward-looking internet governance policies. By involving young people, we ensure these policies reflect the diverse experiences and aspirations of the next generation of internet users. I extend my deepest gratitude to all stakeholders, organizers, and participants for making the 2024 SA Youth IGF a platform for meaningful change. Your engagement, passion, and dedication drive our mission to shape an inclusive, innovative, and just digital future.

Foreword: Chairperson of the South African Youth Internet Governance Forum, Mr Luvo Grey

It is with immense pride and excitement that I introduce the 2024 edition of our report on the South African Youth Internet Governance Forum (SA Youth IGF).

This year, our multi-stakeholder committee has worked tirelessly to create a dynamic platform for young South Africans to voice their opinions on the future of Internet Governance.

Youth participation in the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is crucial. As digital natives, young people offer unique insights and innovative perspectives vital for crafting inclusive, secure, and accessible digital policies.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to empowering youth in Internet Governance.

South African Youth In Internet Governance Forum (ZAYIGF)

The South African Youth Internet Governance Forum (ZAYIGF) delved into the potential benefits and risks associated with emerging technologies such as AI, blockchain, and the Internet of Things.

Speakers emphasized the importance of responsible innovation, ethical considerations, and inclusivity in AI development.

They discussed challenges related to inclusivity in education and employment, alongside the potential for AI to enhance the quality of life while also raising concerns about data privacy, cybersecurity, and the perpetuation of discrimination and bias.

The discussions at the forum revolved around AI, the digital divide, and cybersecurity, with a focus on policymakers balancing innovation with ethical considerations.

Concerns were raised regarding the violation of UN Sustainable Development Goals by AI and blockchain technologies, as well as the importance of AI sovereignty and data security in South Africa.

Further discussions covered AI regulations, sustainability, policy development, digital sovereignty, education, and inclusivity in the AI era. Panelists highlighted challenges in achieving digital sovereignty, AI's impact on education, development, and employment, as well as the need for inclusive AI employment opportunities in South Africa.

Key Action Items proposed included:

1. Exploring partnerships to provide skills training and technology access for youth, particularly in rural areas.

2. Developing qualifications aligned with Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies and implementing learning programs targeting skills development in townships and rural areas.

3. Redefining definitions of employment and income to include digital opportunities for youth.

4. Establishing a safe space and legal protections for young South African innovators to engage in the global economy.

ZAYIGF Paper Presentation: ChatGPT: Should we be Afr.AI.d?

Presenter: Adv. Dennis Ramphomane, Co-founder and CEO of WRM

Adv. Dennis Ramphomane, an AI and intellectual property law specialist, presents a thought-provoking discussion on the implications of Chat GPT, a generative artificial intelligence technology, and its impact on various sectors, particularly the legal profession.

Chat GPT, introduced in November 2022, quickly gained widespread usage, reaching 6 billion users within three months. This AI model has revolutionized industries, replacing human tasks from voiceover gigs to administrative functions, leading to concerns about its disruptive potential. In the legal field, the use of AI, including Chat GPT, has raised ethical and practical challenges.

Instances of AI-generated bogus legal precedents highlight the need for vigilance and adherence to ethical standards in legal practice. While AI can enhance efficiency, it also poses risks such as plagiarism and loss of critical thinking skills.

Adv. Ramphomane emphasizes the importance of upholding ethical standards in the use of AI, especially in the legal profession. Lawyers must ensure the accuracy of AI-generated content and adhere to professional codes of conduct to maintain integrity and trust in the legal system. The environmental impact of AI, including its water consumption, raises concerns regarding its alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly goals related to water conservation and sustainability. Adv. Ramphomane underscores the need for responsible AI development to mitigate adverse environmental effects.

Adv. Ramphomane briefly touches on the potential implications of AI in elections and highlights concerns about infrastructure challenges in South Africa. He suggests that these issues may conflict with both EU policies and UN SDGs, emphasizing the importance of addressing them in AI governance frameworks.

In conclusion, Adv. Ramphomane raises awareness of the multifaceted implications of Chat GPT and AI technologies, urging stakeholders to consider ethical, legal, and environmental concerns in their adoption and regulation.

He emphasizes the need for ongoing dialogue and collaboration to ensure responsible AI development and mitigate potential risks.

Session Panel One:

Addressing Inclusivity in the AI Era: Challenges for Previously Disadvantaged Groups in Employment, Development, and Education

The panel discussion delved into the importance of inclusivity in the AI era, exploring challenges faced by previously disadvantaged groups in education, development, and employment.

The session featured esteemed speakers: Dimakatso Masiteng, Head of ICT at National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), Thabang Mkuma, Technical Adviser for Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) at MICT SETA, and Kemoneiloe Kim Phatoli, CEO of the National Youth ICT Council; and Busisiwe Mathonsi, Regulator and Compliance Manager at Zadna, who moderated the discussion.

The discussion delved into the impact of AI on education, skills development, and employment opportunities. Mkuma highlighted AI's potential to drive inclusive growth by providing accessible learning platforms and creating new avenues for employment and entrepreneurship.

Phatoli shared personal anecdotes of leveraging AI tools to overcome educational barriers and pursue entrepreneurial ventures, underscoring the importance of redefining traditional employment paradigms to accommodate emerging opportunities in the digital economy.

Addressing the challenges of discrimination and bias in technology access and usage, panelists emphasized the need for proactive interventions to ensure equitable opportunities for all individuals, regardless of background or ability. Masiteng highlighted the importance of addressing linguistic barriers and promoting digital literacy among disadvantaged communities to foster inclusive participation in the digital economy.

Panelists stressed the role of policy interventions in reshaping employment definitions and creating an enabling environment for inclusive AI-driven growth. They called for collaborative efforts among government, industry, and civil society stakeholders to address systemic barriers and promote inclusive development.

In concluding remarks, Mathonsi reiterated the imperative of collaboration and collective action to harness the transformative potential of AI for societal and economic development. The panel discussion concluded on an optimistic note, with a shared commitment to advancing inclusivity in the AI era and empowering all individuals to thrive in the digital age.

Session Panel Two:
Navigating the interdisciplinary landscape: governing the data-driven digital economy in South Africa

The panel discussion on governing South Africa's data-driven digital economy was multifaceted, delving into various crucial aspects of digital transformation, skills development, en- trepreneurship, and data governance.

Moderator Ms. Georgina Hlalele, Managing Director of Ora Edutainment, set the stage by highlighting the diverse expertise represented on the panel. Each panelist brought a unique perspective from different sectors within the digital landscape, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the topics discussed. This diversity ensured that the discussion encompassed insights from government, industry, entrepreneurship, and multinational corporations.

Throughout the discussion, expert perspectives were provided by Mr. Thando Hlophe, Founder and Managing Director of KAYISE IT; Ms. Gugu Sema, Senior Manager for Fourth Industrial Revolution at MICT SETA; and Mr. Sipho Mtombeni, Government Affairs and Public Policy Manager at Google. Mr. Hlophe shared insights into grassroots innovation and entrepreneurship, focusing on software development and skills training among youth.

Ms. Sema emphasized the importance of skills development and collaboration in preparing the workforce for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Mr. Mtombeni offered a multinational perspective on data governance and privacy, discussing Google's commitment to compliance with data protection laws globally.

The panel engaged in a lively discussion on data governance, prompted by audience questions about data protection and accessibility. Specific inquiries into Google's compliance with GDPR and user rights underscored the challenges of ensuring data privacy in a transnational context.

Mr. Mtombeni's responses elucidated Google's commitment to upholding high

standards of data protection across different jurisdictions, reassuring users of their privacy rights, and addressing concerns about data privacy on Google Meet. This discussion highlighted the complex interplay between data governance, user privacy, and regulatory compliance in the digital age.

Audience members raised concerns about inclusivity and accessibility in virtual platforms, particularly for users with disabilities. Mr. Mtombeni acknowledged the significance of accessibility features and ongoing efforts to enhance inclusivity within Google's suite of tools, emphasizing the imperative of equal access to digital resources for all users.

Language diversity in AI development was also addressed, with panelists stressing the

importance of practical education methods to overcome language barriers and empower young people to develop AI skills effectively.

In their closing remarks, panelists emphasized the broader societal responsibility in governing technology, stressing that while technology serves as a tool, its impact is ultimately shaped by societal values, norms, and governance frameworks.

Collaboration, innovation, and responsible governance were highlighted as essential elements in navigating the complexities of the digital era.

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Session Three:

Ensuring Data Governance Compliance in the Cloud: Navigating South Africa's Policy Landscape and Upholding Digital Sovereignty

The panel discussion titled "Ensuring Data Governance Compliance in the Cloud: Navigating South Africa's Policy Landscape and Upholding Digital Sovereignty" commenced with an introduction of the esteemed panelists. Ms. Theo Maseloanyane, representing Dimagi, joined online, followed by Ms. Tshepiso Hadebe from Pierce Masithela Attorneys, PPMA Attorneys. Unfortunately, Dr. Makamba was unable to attend, and Advocate Nandipha Ntsaluba was included at Luvo Grey's request to enrich the discussion. Luvo Grey, acting as the Chairperson, steered the conversation toward the crucial aspects of managing and safeguarding data amidst the increasing adoption of cloud computing technologies in South Africa.

The session aimed to delve into the intricate regulatory landscape, focusing on pivotal frameworks like the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) and the upcoming draft Cloud and Data Policy. Panelists, spanning legal, regulatory, cybersecurity, and technology sectors, shared their

insights to navigate data governance, compliance, and collaboration among stakeholders. The overarching goal was to ensure South Africa's digital integrity and sovereignty in the face of evolving technological challenges.

Panelists emphasized the military-like precision required in data governance, stressing the significance of policies and regulations such as minimum information security standards. They highlighted the imperative of data security and compliance, citing examples like the necessi- ty of consent before recording and addressing national security concerns.

The audience discussion veered towards the challenges of policy implementation, particularly in monitoring and evaluation. Advocate Ntsaluba outlined a five-tier monitoring and evaluation framework, emphasizing the need for comprehensive assessments to gauge outcomes effectively. They underscored the impor- tance of education and research in bridging policy gaps and fostering effective implemen- tation.

Incidents such as Huawei's alleged espionage in the African Union headquarters underscored the critical need for robust cybersecurity measures. Panelists stressed the importance of evaluating potential cloud service providers for compliance and implementing stringent security measures to safeguard against such threats. There was a consensus on the necessity of collaboration between government, private sector, and stakeholders to address data

governance challenges comprehensively. Emphasis was placed on aligning policies with regional and continental initiatives such as the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) to foster a conducive environment for innovation and economic growth.

The panel discussion provided valuable insights and recommendations toward a more secure, compliant, and digitally sovereign future for South Africa. By navigating the complex policy landscape, fostering collaboration, and continuously adapting to evolving challenges, the nation can effectively protect its data assets while fostering innovation and economic development.

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