

# AFRICA OPEN DATA AND INTERNET RESEARCH FOUNDATION AND SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

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## IGF LAUNCH #83

**THEME: DIGITALISING THE GRASSROOTS TO CONNECT THE UNCONNECTED**

**Day 3: Friday 2 December 2022**

**Time: 09:30-11:00 EAT / 06:30 - 07:30 GMT)**

**Venue: UN ECA Conference Room #CR5**

**Addis Ababa**

## Africa Community Internet Program (ACIP) “Digitalising The Grassroots”

### AFRICA INTERNET BACKPACK INITIATIVE LAUNCH

#### CONCEPT NOTE:

The internet is an enabling technology that transforms everything it comes into contact with. Globally it has been the leading driver of digital connectivity, propelling all aspects of life, business, government, and international interactivity to go further.

While the achievements in global connectivity activities have been recognised all over, the story is slightly different on the African continent. Unconnected and underserved communities, especially in the rural and peri-urban areas of Africa, continue to be left out of internet connectivity.

The Africa We Want envisions Africa as a continent on equal footing with the rest of the world, as an information society. In this integrated e-economy, every government, business, and citizen can access reliable and affordable digital services by increasing broad penetration and providing venture capital to young entrepreneurs and innovators. Digitization offers new opportunities to boost the economy (through e-commerce), cut red tape and reduce trade costs (through e-government and the digitalization of public services), leapfrog, and participate in the 4th industrial revolution. This potential is even more significant for Landlocked Developing Countries (LDCs). Despite these opportunities, there are several limitations that African countries continue to face, some of which relate to the current infrastructure, digital and technological gaps. For example, ITU Facts and Figures 2017 show that only 21.8% of Africans have access to the internet. In this context, one key question is what does digital connectivity mean for the grassroots in Africa?

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## Objective

The main objective of the Africa Community Internet Programme (ACIP) is to align with linkages in Africa Digitization.

We want to galvanize self-help connectivity principles to build on convergent technology that will enable digitalization to contribute its quota to Africa's 4th industrial revolution.

In order to achieve its overall objective of regional integration and ultimately digital transformation in the context of AU Agenda 2063, the specific objectives of this Africa Community Internet Programme (ACIP) are:

- To develop alternative connectivity tools for a Digital Africa
- To advance collaborative internet connectivity principles across Africa and beyond
- Sustainable financing of community networks

## Concept

Successful technology adoption for societal benefits calls for the inclusiveness of diverse stakeholders. Convergent technologies are critical to driving economic growth. We need to speak the language decision-makers understand, and empower those who have long been marginalised in digital connectivity to connect to the global village and transform their communities themselves, deriving all the benefits through a grassroots approach. The Africa Community Internet Programme (ACIP) offers a wide variety of opportunities critical for the success of cities and nations across the continent to be able to control their digital world through skills and technologies that will enable a transformed people while maintaining environmental integrity for generations yet unborn.

Specifically, the Africa Community Internet Programme (ACIP) will cover the following questions:

- What does digitalization mean for ordinary African agriculture farmers, small traders and those involved in the informal agricultural trade, health and education in rural areas?
- Under what parameters can digital connectivity contribute to helping Africa's transformation as envisaged under UN SDGs and AU Agenda 2063?

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- Is there any possibility of considering self-help connectivity technologies for Africa's unserved and unconnected grassroots?
- What are some of the ongoing initiatives that have the potential to enhance Africa's digital structural transformation in agriculture, health, education and disaster recovery?
- What digital connectivity elements should be considered in the future: capacity building and skills upgrading for all stakeholders; the role of the private sector through Public Private Partnership? What can be done internationally to support Africa's current efforts and initiatives?

## **Policy Alignment**

The AU Agenda 2063 Digital Trade and Digital Economy Development Strategy seeks to enable African countries to benefit from the 4th industrial revolution fully.

## **Expected outputs**

- Policy development of convergent Digital Economy Development in Africa
- Identification of key rural connectivity elements and issues for consideration in Africa Community Internet Programme (ACIP) implementation in education, agriculture and health.
- Enhanced understanding and awareness of disaster connectivity response
- Local Content: Localisation of content on African platforms will be clearly defined
- Enhanced understanding and awareness of how digitalization can help achieve the UN SDGs and AU Agenda 2063.

## **Targeted participants**

Participants at the launch will be the representatives from the African Governments and Private Sector, Civil Society Organizations, Agribusiness associations, Trade associations, Non-governmental Organizations, Ambassadors, think tanks, and Academia.

## **Venue, dates and language**

The launch, which is scheduled to be a hybrid event featuring both online and in-person participation, will take place at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN ECA) in Addis Abeba on December 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022 Time: 09:30-11:00 EAT or 06:30 - 07:30 GMT

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## Information

All information relating to this webinar should be communicated to Mr. Kwaku Antwi (E-mail: [okantwi@gmail.com](mailto:okantwi@gmail.com)) or Mr. Wisdom Donkor (E-mail: [wisdom.dk@gmail.com](mailto:wisdom.dk@gmail.com))

## DRAFT AGENDA

### Part 1

**EMCEE** : Zanyiwe Nthatsi-Asare, CEO of Digitally Legal

**Welcome remarks (2min)**: Wisdom Donkor, Executive Director, Africa Open Data and Internet Research Foundation

**Opening remarks (7mins)**: Dr. Lee W. McKnight , Syracuse University

**Presentation (10mins)** Drs. Lee W. McKnight Syracuse University

**Use Cases (10min): Internet Backpack (Costa Rica, Ghana )**

- Stefano Cattani, Ministry of Communications, Costa Rica
- Jane Asantewaa Appiah-Okyere, Syracuse University

**Rapporteur**: Akinremi Peter Taiwo, CEO, Africa Rapporteur network

### Part 2

**Moderator**: Kwaku Antwi, Africa Open Data and Internet Research Foundation

**High Level Panel (15min)**: Africa Backpack Initiative Launch

- Andre Laperriere, Executive Director, Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN)
- Hon. Neema Lugangira, Member of Parliament, Tanzania
- Dr. Danielle Smith, Syracuse University
- UN ECA

**Keynote Address / Launch of Africa Community Internet Programme (10min)**:

Hon Minister of Communications & ICT, Ethiopia

**Rapporteur**: Akinremi Peter Taiwo, CEO, Africa Rapporteur network

**Closing remarks**: Dr Danielle Smith, Syracuse University