

**AFRICAN UNION**



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**AFRICAN UNION SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL  
COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION AND ICT  
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**DRAFT AFRICAN UNION DECLARATION ON  
INTERNET GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA's  
DIGITAL ECONOMY**

## **DRAFT AFRICAN UNION DECLARATION ON INTERNET GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA'S DIGITAL ECONOMY**

1. We, Heads of State and Government of the African Union, meeting in <session number, venue, date TBC> ;
2. **Acknowledging** that the Internet is an essential tool and a dynamic force for economic, social and cultural development, and recalling in that regard Resolution 26/13 of the Human Rights Council;
3. **Also acknowledging** that Africa's voice in Internet Governance is critical to the development of Africa's economy and enabling Africa to contribute more effectively to the global economy (and that Africa's economy needs to be significantly extended);
4. **Recalling** the commitments made during the Geneva and Tunis World Summits on the Information Society in respect of a shared vision of Internet Governance (IG), which led to the adoption of a Declaration of Principles and a working definition of IG;
5. **Taking into account** the concerns raised by allegations of mass surveillance and violations of the right to privacy in the digital environment and **reaffirming** the commitments made in UN General Assembly resolutions 68/167 and 69/166 to respect and protect the right to privacy, including in the context of digital communication;
6. **Noting** with concern that less than 20% of Africans are online, that the majority of those not connected are in the rural areas, notably women and the poor, and that the average cost of fixed line and mobile internet exceeds 50% of average per capita income;
7. **Reaffirming** our commitment to the need for stability, for the safety of citizens and enterprises, confidentiality of online data security, through the AU Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection, and taking into account the scalability of Africa's Internet infrastructure;
8. **Recalling** the commitment of member states to promote and protect fundamental freedoms, especially the right to freedom of expression and access to information (on and offline), and human and peoples' rights enunciated in instruments of the African Union and of the United Nations *and recognizing that these rights must be upheld online as well as offline*;
9. **Noting** with appreciation the efforts of the AU in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and civil society organizations to strengthen the participation of African countries in global Internet Governance and related public policy discussions, which led to the creation of the African Internet Governance Forum;

10. **Acknowledging** the need for localizing Internet Governance discussions and related public policy matters to enable, develop and support local Internet/Digital economy;
11. **Noting** with satisfaction the renewal, on 16 December 2015, of the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), by the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly which had, in addition, welcomed the Internet Governance Forum's role, as a multiparty forum for discussions on these issues and called for the implementation of the recommendations of the Working Group established for the purpose of proposing improvements to the forum (Document A/67/65-E/2012/48 and Corr.1) and the implementation of the texts of the World Summit on the Information Society;
12. **Recognizing** that multi-stakeholder processes have become an essential and unique approach to engagement in addressing Internet and other policy development processes and to tackling complex issues;
13. **Conscious** that Internet Governance principles should exemplify and uphold the basic tenets of an open, accessible, resilient, inter-operable Internet which led to its remarkable success today, and that they should also form the foundation for any future engagements of all stakeholders in national, regional and international Internet-related policy making efforts;

## **We Hereby**

### **On Internet Governance Principles**

14. Reaffirm that Internet Governance should be inclusive, transparent and accessible to all;
15. Invite all stakeholders to harness the potential of ICTs to help in achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as adopted by the United Nations on 25 September 2015;
16. Acknowledge the importance of maintaining an open Internet based on open standards development processes, as key enablers for inclusive knowledge and information societies;
17. Remain committed to facilitating a resilient, (unique,) universal and interoperable Internet that is accessible to all and will strive to ensure universal and affordable Internet access for all African citizens including people with specific needs;
18. Uphold the spirit of multi-stakeholder Internet Governance in the Tunis Agenda and commit to advance multi-stakeholder approaches that are open, participatory, inclusive, transparent, collaborative, consensus-driven, and that respect cultural, gender and linguistic diversity and which seek to promote accountability and full participation of governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical community and users. We further recognize that the roles

and responsibilities of the different stakeholders can vary depending on the issue under consideration;

19. Request the Regional Economic Communities, (RECs), regional and international organizations involved in Internet and ICT development and regional offices of United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to play a leading role in, and facilitate, national and regional IGFs in their respective regions;
20. Invite the AU Commission to reach out to all stakeholders and provide a framework to ensure the active participation of governments, private sector, civil society, and the technical community on a shared footing to Internet Public Policy and Governance related processes/discussions for decision-making.

### **On Africa's Participation in Internet Governance**

21. We request the AU Commission, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) and ECA to increase the participation of member states, Specialized Institutions and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Internet Governance discussions and related public policy processes, including but not limited to those taking place at the UN, AU, ITU, ICANN, IETF, HRC, AFRINIC, ISOC, AfTLD, IGF, Africa IGF, regional and national IGFs;
22. Request member states, Specialized Institutions and RECs to develop in cooperation with NPCA and AU Commission mechanisms and channels that allow global debate on Internet Governance to be translated and interpreted into local context and encourage active and open sub-regional and local contributions from all stakeholders;
23. Also request the AU Commission and NPCA to develop coordination mechanisms with relevant continental institutions such as AFRINIC, AfNOG, AfREN, AfrISPA on matters related to Internet Governance and cyberspace;
24. Encourage Member States to support and encourage the participation of all stakeholders in national and Regional IGFs (which form the foundation stones of the African IGF);
25. Urge the AU Commission and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to support the establishment of an Africa Internet Development & Governance Observatory and to put in place mechanisms to track and follow-up on recommendations from the regional and global IGFs and to provide periodic reports to member states;
26. Urge Member States of the African Union to contribute effectively and take the lead in the establishment of national and regional IGFs and to fully participate in regional IGFs as well as in the African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF).

### **On development of Africa's Digital Economy**

27. Undertake to ensure legal and regulatory environments that will enable growth of Africa's Digital economy through innovative applications and services, making the Internet central to Africa's development agenda;
28. Promote local content and put in place the necessary mechanisms to ensure equitable distribution of Internet revenues;
29. Foster partnerships to stimulate investment in ICT and Internet infrastructure;
30. Undertake to ratify the Malabo Convention to combat cybercrimes while promoting personal data protection and respecting human rights within appropriate legal frameworks. In so doing, we will preserve the integrity and reliability of the regional Internet Infrastructure as well as local users' trust and reliance on the Internet for secure electronic transactions;
31. Request the AU Commission and NPCA, in collaboration with other key stakeholders, to assess Africa's digital economy to determine areas that need strengthening or development of new policies in line with stimulating the growth of Africa's Digital economy;
32. Pledge to work together in the fight against the inappropriate use of Information and Communication Technologies in a bid to reach a consensus, in the medium term, on the best cyber security mechanisms and practices in Africa;
33. Request the AU Commission to work with Member States, partners and stakeholders to enhance Africa's future participation in new gTLDs rounds by examining the factors hampering participation, facilitating the development of business models relevant to Africa and engaging ICANN to lower the barriers to entry for African stakeholders';
34. Request the AU Commission to work with Member States, the private sector, and other partners to ensure that Africa develops a robust infrastructure to enable effective participation in the global Internet (particularly DNS, the hosting industry ), and ensure that Africans are custodians of their data and information;
35. Request the AU Commission to work with relevant stakeholders to develop a common African Program of Action on Internet Governance, which will ensure that the rights of Africans on the Internet are promoted and upheld, and that African concerns are recognized in the global Internet Governance regime.

### **On Management of Domain Names**

36. Undertake to promote the use of country code Top-Level Domains (ccTLDs) as elements of national and continental branding and to ensure that ccTLD registries are operated as public-benefit institutions that can create, nurture and support local critical infrastructure and a local community able to attract investments;

37. Undertake to continue promoting the adoption of IPv6 and to lead by example through its adoption and deployment of IPv6 by ccTLD registries, as well as public departments and agencies' network infrastructures;
38. Request the AU Commission to work in collaboration with concerned institutions to reach agreements with ccTLD registries operated by private individuals or operated by entities outside of national jurisdiction to transfer the registries and enable them to operate as public benefit bodies;
39. Request the AU Commission to [establish](#) a Clearing House for best practices in the management of ccTLD registries in Africa, and to encourage and facilitate the sharing of lessons learned by Member States in securing national ownership of the operation of their ccTLD registries.

### **On Global Internet Governance**

40. Urge the international community to transform the non-global institutions into more inclusive global institutions that represent all citizens of the world, taking into account the concerns and needs of Africa and other developing countries, while advocating for their continued role as the core of the global Internet governance ecosystem;
41. We ask the AU Commission, working through member states GAC representatives and other stakeholders, to monitor the process of improving IANA adopted in Marrakesh in March 2016;
42. Reaffirm our commitment to work with these organisations and with all partners so that these institutions become more global in their nature.

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

AU	African Union
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development.
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
ICANN	Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
IETF	Internet Engineering Task Force
HRC	Human Rights Council
AFRINIC	African Network Information Centre
ISOC	Internet Society
AfTLD	African Top Level Domain
IGF	Internet Governance Forum
AfIGF	African Internet Governance Forum
afNOG	African Network Operators Group
AfREN	Africa Research and Education Networking
AfriISPA	African Internet Service Providers Association
ccTLD	Country Code Top-Level Domain
IPV6	Internet Protocol version 6
gTLDs	Generic Top-Level Domains
DNS	Domain Name System
GAC	Governmental Advisory Committee
IANA	Internet Assigned Numbers Authority