

AFRICAN UNION

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AU-SADC REGIONAL INTERNET EXCHANGE WORKSHOP

3-7 February 2014

OPENING SPEECH OF THE AUC HEAD OF INFORMATION SOCIETY

- **Representative of the Ministry of Transport and Communications of BOTSWANA, XXXX**
- **Representative of the CHAIR OF THE SADC, MALAWI XXXX**
- **Director of Infrastructure and Services of SADC**
- **Chief Executive Officer of the BOTSWANA Communications Regulatory Authority, XXXX**
- **Distinguished participants,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**
- **All protocol observed.**

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to this **AU-SADC** Regional Internet Exchange Workshop. This is my first time in Botswana and third event I am participating in this important AU Region: The Southern African Region

It will be a quite good experience

- **Distinguished participants,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Internet in Africa has been growing steadily over the past several years and is already playing a significant role in Africa's development, creating employment, providing opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as acting as an enabler in the digital delivery of government services, education, and healthcare.

The renaissance and transformation of Africa by ICT has started.

But Africa is currently paying overseas carriers to exchange “local” (intra-continental) traffic on our behalf. This is both a costly as well as an inefficient way of handling intra-continental exchange of Internet traffic.

It is also a movement against our regional and continental integration

Increasing efficiency of national & regional traffic is an area that has thus far not been addressed, resulting in a slow and expensive exchange of African inter-country traffic via overseas hubs located mainly in the USA and Europe.

This why the African Union organs adopted decisions related to the development of African Internet Exchange System (AXIS).

The African Union Commission then signed an agreement with the Lead Financier (Luxembourg Development Agency) for the implementation of the African Internet Exchange System project funded by the EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund and the Government of Luxembourg.

AXIS constitutes one of the three PIDA ICT – Priority Action Plan - PAP

The aim of AXIS is to support the establishment of National IXP and Regional IXPs to promote the exchange of intra-Africa internet traffic within the continent.

It is in this context that the African Union in collaboration with SADC is organizing the AU-SADC Regional IXP Workshop.

The Main Objectives of this Regional Internet Exchange Points / Regional Internet Carrier Workshop are three:

1. To foster stakeholder discussions on developing national IXPs to become Regional IXPs
2. To understand Regional IXP and Regional Internet Carrier business models
3. To foster stakeholder discussions on implementing policies that support the emergence and growth of Regional Internet Carriers

The Expected Outcomes are:

- Adopt the proposed definition of Regional IXPs and Regional Internet Carrier
- Adopt the policy recommendations that promote local hosting, peering and creation of local content to support growing the critical mass of an IXP
- Agree on the kind of support that National IXPs in Southern Africa require to grow into Regional IXPs
- Draft Minimum criteria for selecting the National IXPs in Southern Africa to be supported to grow into Regional IXPs
- Draft Minimum criteria for selecting the ISPs that meet the definition of a Regional Internet Carrier to be considered for the mentorship and capacity building program
- Adopt the policy framework recommendations
- Establish the policy framework committee

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen

All economic analysis are emphasizing that it is time for Africa to rise.

On January 21st the IMF, in presenting its forecast for 2014 announced that among all regions of the world, the sub-Saharan Africa's growth rate will accelerate the most, going from 5.1% in 2013 to 6.1% in 2014.

For comparison Russia growth rate will be 2.3%, Brazil 2.3%, the US 2.8%, India 5.4%, France and Italy below 1% and UK 2.4%.

In 2014 Africa will receive around 50 Billion US Dollars in foreign investment.

It is obvious that the transformation of Africa will be based on solid infrastructure networks of transport, energy, ICT that are integrated, reliable, efficient and affordable, safe and environmentally friendly.

Implementing this ambitious program requires adequate instruments comprising financial, management, coordination aspects and above all our

commitments to strengthen our capacity to better organize our strategic, economic and political actions.

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to re-emphasize the importance of the success of this workshop and thank you all for your presence here today testifying your commitment to working together, hand in hand and in harmony between us to develop regional IXPs.

With this commitment, we can expect a quick and smooth implementation of this important program designed to setting-up connected and integrated infrastructure networks in order to enhance regional integration, boost intra-African trade, create jobs, support and speed-up the establishment of the African Economic Community.

I wish our meeting fruitful deliberations.

Thank you for your kind attention.