



Press Release

African Union Cybersecurity Expert Group holds its first inaugural meeting

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 12 December 2019: Africa has made major headway in developing its digital ecosystem in the past decade. Nonetheless, there is still an evident gap among African Union (AU) Member States in terms of awareness, understanding, knowledge and capacity to deploy and adopt the proper strategies, capabilities and programs to mitigate cyber threats. The ongoing digital transformation in Africa will not provide the desired

social and economic benefits unless Africans have access to a secure and trusted Cyberspace. It is against this backdrop that the first meeting of the African Union Cybersecurity Expert Group (AUCSEG) held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 10 to 12 December 2019.

Ten (10) Cybersecurity experts representing the five African regions gathered in Addis Ababa to discuss Cybersecurity issues and challenges on the continent and deliberated on ways on how best to address those challenges.

The AUCSEG will be specifically tasked with the following:

- Advising the African Union Commission (AUC) on cyber security issues and policies;
- Proposing solutions to facilitate the ratification and domestication of the Malabo Convention into national laws;
- Sharing best practice on how to mitigate current and new threats and on the protection of critical infrastructure and election systems as well ;
- Identifying areas of research needed for the formulation of policies, guidelines, etc., which can be general or sector-specific
- Identifying ways to support the establishment and development of Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs);
- Developing ways for close collaboration among AU Member States and stakeholders, on Cybersecurity;
- Proposing ways to build capacities and to increase skills in ICTs security and their proper use
- Supporting AU on building African Position within the international process related to Cybersecurity including ways of cooperation with international stakeholders.

The group also will adopt a strategies and action plans to address the African cybersecurity needs and gaps in resources and know-how. The final objective is to propose decisions on the promotion of Cybersecurity for socio-economic development in Africa.

In its 1st meeting, the Experts' Group declared that “As Africans, we need to articulate our own Philosophy, Ethics, Policy, Strategies and accountability frameworks for Cyberspace, Cybersecurity and Cognitive or Artificial Intelligence (AI)”.The group also noted that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are the greatest opportunity for Africa to address efficiently and quickly some of its major development challenges; but their extensive use has also brought about increased cyber-criminality. The group further believes that effectively responding to emerging threats such as cybercrime and Cyber terrorism has increasingly become a top priority for all African governments.

The Committee will be an evolving, compact, and trusted network of experts formed by the AU Commission in collaboration with the African Internet community.

Notes to the Editor:

In January 2018, the 32nd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council endorsed the decision of the Specialized Technical Committee on ICTs, [EX.CL/Dec.987 \(XXXII\)](#) to create an [Africa Cyber Security Collaboration and Coordination Committee](#) to advise the AUC on the Cyber strategies and to implement the Cyber Security as a flagship project of the African Union Agenda 2063. This committee advise the AUC in matters related to Cybersecurity, Cybercrime, Cyber-legislations, online privacy and data protection as well as digital policy related issues. The expert group will help in supporting AUC to facilitate coordination and information sharing among African countries & regions and different stakeholders; identify cybersecurity areas where resources are needed; and advising on national, regional and continental strategies and initiatives that should be prioritized.

For any information related to AUCSEG, contact:

Mr. Adil Suleiman | Senior Policy Officer, Telecom and ICT | Department of Infrastructure and Energy, African Union Commission | E-mail: suleimana@africa-union.org

Media inquiry Contacts:

Esther Azaa Tankou, Head of Information Division, Tel: +251911361185, E-mail: yamboue@yahoo.com

Mr. Gamal Eldin Ahmed A. Karrar | Senior Communication Officer | Directorate of Information and Communications (DIC) | E-mail: GamalK@africa-union.org

For further information: Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: DIC@africa-union.org | Web Site: www.au.int | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

Follow us:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AfricanUnionCommission>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/AfricanUnion>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/AUCCommission>