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YOUTH IGF 2021 PARTICIPATION

73 PARTICIPANTS

22 SPEAKERS

14 yrs YOUNGEST PARTICIPANT

YOUTH IGF 2021 PARTICIPATION
The Kenya Youth IGF Forum is an initiative launched to bring together young people around the country and foster their engagement in a debate on Internet governance. The youth forum offers opportunities for young people to exchange their ideas and experiences with experts from business, academia, and Government.

The strong participation of stakeholders such as the Ministry of Youth and ICT, Facebook, the Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), and ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa amongst others, to partner and support the event is an indication of their commitment to the development and growth in participation of the youth in the governance of the internet in Kenya.

Due to the ongoing Covid–19 pandemic, the Kenya Youth IGF was convened as a virtual event with the participation of 73 people. The event was free to attend and was streamed online.

In the opening remarks made by Barrack Otieno, the Multistakeholder Advisory Group Chair of the 2021 Kenya IGF, he highlighted the importance of youth participation in forums that discussed issues affecting them.

Grace Githaiga, Convener at KICTANet detailed the importance of the Youth IGF and why young people need to get engaged in internet governance. She also thanked partners and other stakeholders for making the IGF a success.

The theme of the forum, ‘Internet United: The Role of the Youth’ was further broken down into three thematic areas; data governance, data inclusion and security, stability, safety and resilience.

The Government was represented by Nadia Ahmed, Cabinet Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Youth and ICT, who detailed a number of Multi-sectoral protection action plans driven by the Ministry that will help all stakeholders come together to promote online safety and protect young people from the negative aspects of the internet without limiting the positive effects. She also made commitments by the Ministry towards capacity building and awareness, especially for law enforcement and judicial officers on internet safety, and for the provision of sufficient policy and legal frameworks to address challenges arising from data protection, digital inclusion, content regulation, and cyber security.
Through her keynote address, Anja Gengo from the IGF Secretariat in Geneva expressed the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the various aspects of the digital divide including, gender-based divide, given the fact that many women and girls are still deprived of meaningful access to the internet. She mentioned that those issues will be discussed during the 2021 16th global annual IGF forum hosted by the Government of Poland.

In the first session on Data Governance, Content Regulation, and Consumer Rights, the panelists explored approaches to content moderation. Content moderation should be compliant with human rights frameworks, transparent and accountable, and enable a safe, united and inclusive Internet. The panelists also discussed what is needed to ensure that data governance frameworks are effective in mandating the responsible and trustworthy use of data with respect for privacy.

In the second session on Digital Inclusion, Universal access and meaningful connectivity, the panelists discussed the main challenges that people face in obtaining and making full use of internet access and the relevant regulatory issues that require attention to enabling broader affordable and quality access at the community level.

In the third session on Security, Stability, Safety, and Resilience, the panelists reviewed the National Cybersecurity Strategy, discussed the cyber risk landscape in light of COVID-19 and looked at what could be done nationally and internationally to curb the risk of cyber-attacks.

In the open plenary session, the participants discussed emerging issues such as the role the internet can play to help marginalized communities, women and the youth, the role of private public partnerships and the participation of digital platforms in bridging the internet access gaps.

The forum was brought to a close by Desmond Mushi, Public Policy Manager, East and Horn of Africa at Facebook, who gave a summary of the sessions that had been held and emphasized key areas that were identified by the government in bridging the digital divide to ensure that Kenya catches up with global pioneers and to remove and address inconsistencies in good services and ensure inclusion in underserved areas. He also mentioned that Facebook has been working closely with Government and key stakeholders including the Communication Authority of Kenya and the Civil Society Organisations to understand and address issues that will ensure the platform is safe through privacy features and capacity building for parents, caregivers and children.

The vote of thanks was given by Keith Andere from the Africa Youth Commission who expressed his gratitude to all participants for the exciting session.

In conclusion, the event was an outstanding success and was able to give clear input from the youth to the main event, the Kenya IGF forum.
The forum commenced with **Keith Andere** welcoming the participants to the session and pre-empting an exciting conversation around the issues of Kenya Internet Governance and how young people as key stakeholders are going to play a key role.

**Omar Hamed** of Jamhuri High School thanked the participants for joining the session and proceeded to describe Internet governance as the rules and policies that govern cyberspace, making it safe for everyone. The Kenya IGF has successfully held 14 meetings, and it is interesting to note that the Kenya IGF consists mostly of the youth.

He mentioned that some of the benefits of having the forum is to deliberate different issues on internet safety; understanding the free flow of information, security and privacy of data, improving accessibility especially in developing countries, establishing standards in exchange of information to avoid piracy and setting up standards for Internet Governance.
Barrack Otieno commended the team that took the lead in hosting the Youth IGF since it is a critical part of the main internet governance forum. He proceeded to invite the youth as a stakeholder.

He encouraged the youth to be active participants in the conversation. He revealed that at the Multistakeholder Advisory Group, there are many youths that are organizing the Kenya school of Internet governance and other activities that are part of the Kenya IGF week. He noted that the secretariat of the Kenya Internet Governance Forum is very youthful which is a testament to the power of the Youth in the Internet Governance Forum processes as they are now on the table and not on the menu.

Grace Githaiga, Convener, KICTANet
Grace thanked the organisers of the forum and proceeded to give a brief of the Kenya ICT Action Network which is a think tank for ICT policy formulation and regulations. KICTANet has convened the Kenya IGF since 2008. The network acts as a catalyst for reform in the ICT sector and is guided by 4 pillars: Policy advocacy, Stakeholder engagement, Research, and Capacity building. It also hosts the Kenya School of Internet Governance. KICTANet provides a mechanism for
collaboration and cooperation in ICT matters among all stakeholders may they be business, academia, government, civil society, or technical community.

KICTANet provides a framework for collaboration and organizes the Kenya IGF week that includes several activities, including the Kenya IGF Forum. KICTANet believes in having new and fresh voices in the ICT policy space.

**Nadia Ahmed, CAS Ministry of Youth and ICT**

Nadia Ahmed started by thanking the organizers of the Kenya youth IGF for organizing the forum to not only discuss issues on Internet governance but also create opportunities for networking and collaboration between key stakeholders. She also commended them for championing capacity development and opening up spaces for new voices with a majority of the beneficiaries being young people who have since been meaningfully engaged in subsequent national and regional Internet government forums.

She stated that in recent years, the Internet governance ecosystem has really witnessed a great number of young users; stating that while young people are the largest demographic group on the Internet, they are not represented at an appropriate level in the decisions regarding the Internet, emphasizing the importance of public policy issues on youth.

Under Vision 2030 of the key goals of the Ministry is to facilitate universal access to reliable and affordable ICT infrastructure through the country as an enabler of social, economic growth, however, a challenge they seek to address as a Ministry is the inconsistency in the ICT infrastructure and the services that are there.

There are challenges such as the digital divide that have a serious negative impact especially among marginalized youths and persons living with disabilities, which needs to be addressed, and so the Ministry, therefore, work more closely with service providers to ensure affordable Internet promoting inclusive and overall access. Access, however, has also created new crimes some of which target the youth. Lack of protection can put them at risk.

The Ministry is working on a number of Multi-sectoral protection action plans that will help all stakeholders come together to promote online safety and protect young people on the Internet without limiting the positive effects of the Internet. The Ministry has been at the forefront, working with various stakeholders, including youth to ensure continued capacity building and awareness creation.
She mentioned that the Law Enforcement agencies and Judicial Officers need to be equipped to manage these issues. Misinformation attacks are on the rise in Kenya. While ensuring media literacy is explored in this forum, there is a need to focus on issues that promote social cohesion. A holistic approach is needed for mental wellbeing on the internet and the policies that govern the use of technology.

Nadia concluded by urging all stakeholders to support young people’s important role in internet governance.

Commitments from the Government
The Ministry of Youth and ICT is working on multi-sectorial protection action plans that will promote online safety and ensure that law enforcement agencies and judicial officers are equipped to adequately handle online protection related matters.

The Ministry is also working with various stakeholders including the youth to ensure continued capacity building and awareness creation.

The Ministry is also working to ensure that there is sufficient policy and legal frameworks to address challenges arising from data protection, digital inclusion, content regulation and cyber security.
A
nja Gengo spoke about the COVID-19 pandemic and how it demonstrated to us the impact of the internet on our lives. The world realised at a very personal level how the internet and related tools and services are so critical to humanity.

Without access to digital technologies, and the knowledge to use the tech, we would not be able to work, communicate, to see our loved ones through the screens of our devices, to continue educating ourselves and so on. Many of us, fortunate enough to have access to the internet, continue working and thriving in a completely different way.

The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated the harms that exist in the online world. Primarily, we refer to cyber-attacks, disinformation and massive channeling of propaganda. The negative effects for the global world of the various aspects of digital divides including gender based divides, given the fact that many women and girls are still deprived from accessing the internet or meaningfully learning how to use them.

Anja mentioned that during the 16th annual IGF forum hosted by the Government of Poland, they will be addressing these issues. It is expected that the IGF will send strong messages on how the world is dependent on the internet. This pandemic has illustrated and underlined the need to stand for an accessible, safe, trustworthy and secure internet. She hoped the IGF will end with concrete messages, follow-ups for the way to bridge the digital divide and ensure we are all connected online to benefit from digital technologies.
Anja also mentioned the 16th IGF will be hosted in a hybrid format due to travel restrictions. The traditional online participation of the IGF is expected to have a higher participation than previous years.

One of the opportunities to find out what happens at the IGF in Katowice relates primarily to the 3rd open consultations and MAG meeting hosted at the Geneva UN office. Youth are central not just to the IGF, but the UN as well. Young people have a set role in the IGF and that is the UN secretary general’s position. The young people will have a dedicated set of activities at the 16th IGF in Poland. Anja finished her session with the hope that the meeting will result in concrete messages and outputs because their processes would benefit from the inputs and advice of the Kenya IGF agenda.

Key Points:

• The pandemic has shown us how reliant we are on the internet to work from everywhere.
• The youth continue to have a space of their own at the table and have a set role in the IGF.
• Emphasis on the outcome at the local IGF levels that will influence the global IGF conversation.
How to ensure that approaches to content moderation are compliant with human rights frameworks, are transparent and accountable, and enable a safe, united and inclusive Internet.

Brian commenced by stating that it is important for stakeholders to apply human rights to content in moderation. For example, the right to privacy has been infringed on by automated systems. The EU Digital Services Act is not perfect but it stipulates that human rights be at the front of content moderation.
He mentioned that Companies must do their due diligence and identify how they impact users. For example, manipulation and disinformation spreads on social media platforms. However, there are many ways the social media platforms can moderate the content. The platforms can invest more in human moderators who complement AI to ensure their platforms aren’t used for malicious purposes.

What is needed to ensure that data governance frameworks are effective in mandating the responsible and trustworthy use of data, with respect for privacy?

There are privacy measures that need to evolve; How can we protect the data to not be accessed by unauthorized persons? We have to empower the people to implement data government frameworks. We need to train these data processors properly. We need to constantly analyze them.

**Bridget Andere, Africa Policy Associate - Access Now**

What regulatory approaches could be effective in upholding consumer rights, offering adequate remedies for rights violations, and eliminating unfair and deceptive practices from the part of Internet companies?

**Bridget** stated that there is a need to emphasize that content moderation is linked to human rights with a need to complement automated moderation as it doesn’t have social and political context. She mentioned that Governments are hiding provisions in the law and encouraging very specific definitions, for example on national security and terrorism. She hoped that through policy, they could push the government to stop making policy on a whim and from hiding laws through miscellaneous amendments where they increase the powers of Government. If it is up to one person to make decisions, (in this case the Cabinet Secretary), there is no way we are making good policy.

She added that with big tech, the biggest problems are platforms with Terms & Conditions that have a number of content that are not clear. Blanket consent should be discouraged. She mentioned that they are advocating for the need to be more transparent with how user data is used by platforms. Platform users don’t know what right they have in terms of data protection.

**How can we prevent internet shutdowns?**

It is important that every internet shutdown is documented to make sure there is a reduction in the number of times they occur, with a need to report when shutdowns are occurring. She mentioned that her organisation always names and shames internet shutdowns culprits.

**Winfred Anyona, Account Manager - Cellulant**

What regulatory approaches could be effective in upholding consumer rights, offering adequate remedies for rights violations, and eliminating unfair and deceptive practices from the part of Internet companies?
The key issue is transparency reporting. Young people are using the internet for commercial work, research and advertising. Something they could consider is to put a simplified narrative of the agreement, and then detailed clauses could be added as links. Transparency by the companies should be deliberate.

**Allan Chenoi – Code for Africa**

What is needed to ensure that data governance frameworks are effective in mandating the responsible and trustworthy use of data, with respect for privacy?

Allan mentioned that when it comes to data governance, one key thing is that the Government should be transparent. It is easier where the Government releases information in a way that is easy to read.

There are a lot of bot accounts used to amplify content on these platforms. He mentioned the need to educate on the difference between bot and actual humans as well as a platform’s actions on content. He advised users to read the Terms & Conditions on what these platforms will take down. He also mentioned that his organization advocates for independent moderation.

**Brian King, Jamhuri High School**

Brian mentioned that the Youth IGF is about protecting young people without restricting their access to the internet. The only way to achieve this is to get ISPs to understand the needs of the youth. He felt that privacy should be a key principle of the internet where someone is not surveilled while doing business online.

**Key Points:**

- It is important for us to apply human rights to content moderation.
- We have to empower the people to implement data governance frameworks.
- The government should be transparent on how data governance is performed.
- Privacy is a state where someone is not disturbed or watched while doing business online.
Allan Ochola, ASAPbio Fellow, PASET – RSIF
What can be learned from the COVID-19 pandemic context about the relationship between digital inequality and social and economic rights?
Allan stated that there are a number of issues when discussing inequality, but at the top of the list is language.

What are the main challenges that people face in obtaining and making full use of Internet access?
When it comes to inclusion and access, there is a need for skills and training. There is also a need to empower the teachers and education institutions. Kenya is still in its formative years when it comes to broadband access. It takes about 50% of the average salary to buy a mid-range smartphone.
What are the relevant regulatory issues that require attention to enabling broader affordable and quality access at the community level?

A citizen scientific approach is important when it comes to managing regulatory issues. We need to come up with approaches on how to engage the youth. People are still figuring out. The Government has a few regulations but we need to push for more. There needs to be participation in creating these regulations.

What are the top three priorities that will need to be addressed in the coming year, and what roles can be played by stakeholders?

When it comes to language, peripheral languages lack digital presence. As globalization becomes the norm, no one will be publishing in our native languages.

How are we fixing the lack of skills in the youth?

It is a gap in a space where so many people do not have those opportunities. These forums are important to bring out such issues and the idea is to be an advocate and be a producer. The youth need to be active in some of these forums.

Ida Ng’ang’a, Regional Head – UNESCO

What can be learned from the COVID-19 pandemic context about the relationship between digital inequality and social and economic rights?

When addressing inequality, the impacts are far and wide. During the pandemic; the lower income counties are having a harder time when it comes to access to the internet. The most vulnerable are low income families. If you are looking at accessibility and access to the internet, it puts these groups at a disadvantage.

Ephraim Kenyanito - Senior Programme Officer - Article19

What can be learned from the COVID-19 pandemic context about the relationship between digital inequality and social and economic rights?

The pandemic has shown that the internet is a lifesaver. Health information can be shared around the world. Government should make sure there is universal access to the internet. Shutting down the internet promotes misinformation. During times of challenges, there should be more access to information. By limiting, you allow the spread of misinformation.

What are the relevant regulatory issues that require attention to enabling broader affordable and quality access at the community level?

The telecom providers have been contributing to the Universal Service Fund for internet infrastructure. We need to make sure those funds are going to that purpose and not any other. The fund can be used to support the community.
What are the barriers for access to the internet?
Access to finance. Awareness on how to use the internet. We should move from a consumption mindset to a production mindset.

How do we increase public access to the internet?
“Tele-centers; unfortunately, we let those things die and we should bring them back. It is an issue of subsidization and we should reduce taxation to promote such businesses.”

Sheila Lwangu, Mbagathi Secondary School
Sheila stated that the top issue to be addressed was digital inclusion, for all people to use the internet. On impeded access, making the internet cheap will allow people to use the internet for various things. The wider outcomes of internet access are very good.

Key Points:

• Kenya is still lagging behind when it comes to broadband access.
• During the pandemic; the lower income countries are having a harder time when it comes to access to the internet.
• Shutting down the internet promotes misinformation.
John Ombagi, Technical Lead – TAI SOC

What are the critical areas for consideration in review of our national cybersecurity strategy?
Looking at a national cybersecurity strategy, one of the things we should look at is the protection of Kenyans and our systems. Secondly, we can try and bring out the importance of securing the Government. We still have a Government using old systems. Another conversation is combating cybercrime. Businesses are being moved from physical to online. Building a national cyber capacity is important so we are not left behind.

What are the top three priorities that will need to be addressed in the coming year and what roles can be played by stakeholders?
We have the Kenya Data Protection Act; there is expectation from business holders to protect personal data. Secondly, trying to build national capacity, making sure we have the right talent. There is also a need to make sure the youth are being given the right tools and priorities as well as making sure that the policies are updated.

What are the critical areas for consideration in review of our national cybersecurity strategy?
We’re looking at resilience. People depend on government services. The Singaporean strategy focuses on building national, safe cyberspace and strengthening cybersecurity. The level they have been at is incredible. They look at it as an opportunity. They have been able to create jobs. The Kenyan one needs to be updated.

Comment on the cyber risk landscape in light of COVID-19. Covid-19 has moved business online, people are working from home. It has exposed the landscape even more. In reality, Covid-19 has come with its own challenges; we’re talking about work from anywhere, therefore the attacks have become more complex.

What are the overarching principles that will ensure trust, security and stability of our cyberspace?
It depends on how you define trust. People will want to know that the internet is not being taken advantage of by those in power. There must be legislation. We’ve seen what happened in the EU with the EU Regulation Act, ensuring that your identity is verifiable. To ensure that infrastructures are put in place that gives you that trust and confidence. People need to be informed on how their data is being used.

What can be done at the national and international level to tackle cyber-attacks?
Nations have a lot to do in terms of building capacity. When it comes to the international community, there is a lot to do by the UN. Cybercrime is a huge economy. It is a massive crisis. There is the issue of building clear legislation. There are a lot of countries, especially in Africa that don’t have clear legislation.

What are the top three priorities that will need to be addressed in the coming year and what roles can be played by stakeholders?
Information sharing and collaboration; we need to build cyber capacity and skills. Information sharing will help if we look at the continuous threat of cybercrime.
Lynn Ouko, Child Online Safety Advocate
She began by asking, “Do you think children need access to the internet?” They need it for information purposes, playing interactive games with friends and for research and classwork assignments.

Are children safe while online?
No, no one is safe online.

Why do children need to be safe online?
Cyber bullying.
To avoid contacting strangers.
To avoid bad content.
How can children keep safe online?
Parents are called to always supervise what children are doing online, keep electronic devices
in open areas, set time limits on the internet, activate child restrictions where available and review games and apps before downloading.

**Key Points:**

- Build the national cyber security capacity.
- In reality, the Covid-19 pandemic has come with its own challenges, since we’re talking about work from anywhere and the attacks have become more complex.
- Cybercrime is a huge economy; therefore, it is a massive crisis.
Emerging Issues.

Jennifer began the session by stating that for the youth, the power might be with the adults, but the power is for the youth.

Open Forum

How could the internet be expanded to rural communities?

Allan: We look at issues around infrastructure and frameworks, costs, data and incentives, and skills. There needs to be a multifaceted approach when touching on the issues of inclusivity.

Albert: There is a need for sensitization as to why they need the internet. There is a need to make a connection between tech and their day to day lives and how it can improve their lives. He felt that especially in the rural areas, most people don’t see the need for tech in their day to day lives.

Winfred: We need to also include them, tell them how they can use the internet to improve themselves. Some are not aware they can sell their products online. The Government is working with service providers to make it more affordable to make the internet more affordable for people in the rural areas because affordability is key.

Jenny: A study done by MasterCard on the Digital Economy stated that Digital platforms are moving from social to economical platforms for the youth to be able to use these platforms to make a living. Someone in Turkana should be able to compete with someone in Nairobi. There is a need for company policies that ensure connectivity and inclusivity across the country.

Allan: This also calls for public and private partnerships. Using public libraries and churches when it comes to where people can connect. We are still not up to the global recommended cost for device access and accessibility to the internet. There is a need for innovative thinking to find ways to improve connectivity.

Nura Said: How can we make women in the rural areas participate?

Rebecca: Empower them and give them the tools. Train women on how to create content.

Omar: How do parental controls ensure that the content that children access is safe?

How do we give access to the internet for children in rural areas?

Desmond: In terms of access, there is a huge role that the government has to play. In terms of parental control, those features are available on most platforms. We train parents to ensure that children have guardians that have the skills to protect.

Sheila: What assurance do we have from the Kenyan government on privacy on the internet?

Desmond from Facebook mentioned that users have control on the kind of data you share with Facebook as well as others.
Key Points:

There is a need for sensitization as to why people in rural communities need the internet.

Digital platforms such as Facebook and Instagram are moving from social to economical platforms.

Key Commitments from Facebook

Measures to ensure inclusion the Government has a huge role to play, ensuring that the internet is accessible in the rural areas, affordable and relevant. This can be done through sensitization; in this case Facebook has been useful to small businesses across the region.

Facebook trains parents and children to equip the caregivers so that they can understand the risk and protect the children.

On privacy, you have control on what you share online, and those are features that are accessible for users to protect and decide what others will see about you. The second thing is that Facebook does awareness campaigns that ensure that most users are aware that they can protect the information that they share on their platforms.
Desmond Mushi – Facebook – Public Policy Manager, East and Horn of Africa

Desmond said that he had learnt a lot from the future leaders and heard from them what seem to be the future opportunities from the different platforms and also the issues such as cyberbullying among others that require policy changes.

Key areas have been identified by the Government on bridging the digital divide to ensure that Kenya catches up with global pioneers and to remove and address inconsistencies in good services and ensure inclusion in rural and urban areas.

Facebook has been working closely with Government and key stakeholders including the Communication Authority and the Civil Society space to understand and address issues that will ensure the platform is safe, through privacy features and capacity building for parents, caregivers and children.

Facebook is also keen to participate in multi-sectoral efforts that aim to address the challenges that are present in the use of social media.

There are a number of initiatives aimed at ensuring that users are aware about their privacy options and moderation of content.

He concluded that the issues that have been highlighted by the panelists are important to Facebook and to other key stakeholders such as Government and other Authorities to ensure the safe use of the internet.
Vote of Thanks

Moderator: Keith Andere
African Youth Commission

Keith began his vote of thanks by expressing gratitude to the partners that made it possible to host the Kenya IGF 2021 and all those who made sure that the program went smoothly, he thanked the moderators who run the program smoothly, the panelists who helped unpack the contents of the issues being highlighted in the sessions and to the young panelists who participated in the event and contributed brilliantly and to all the 78 participants who joined the session.
KENYA YOUTH INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

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