

## **REPORT ON THE UGANDA NATIONAL INTERNET GOVERNMENT FORUM (NIGF) WORKSHOP HELD ON OCTOBER 13 2006**

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held in Tunis, Tunisia, in November 2005 recommended the establishment of National Internet Governance Forums (NIGFs) in all ITU Member States. As a follow-up to the WSIS pronouncements, the global forum for multi-stakeholders' policy dialogue called the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was held in Athens, Greece, in November 2006. It was in this regard that the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) and the Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) organised a workshop on October 13 2006. The objectives of the workshop were, among others, to discuss the establishment of an NIGF for Uganda, and to identify key issues that Uganda should present at the inaugural IGF in Athens.

The keynote speaker at the event was Dr Nii Quaynor, Convenor of the African Networks Operators Group (AfNOG), and a former member of the board of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) facilitated his attendance as part of its campaign to improve the involvement of African stakeholders in Internet Governance issues.

The theme for the workshop was "The Road to Athens - Issues for Uganda". It was structured along the following broad themes:

- a) Openness - Freedom of expression, free flow of information, ideas and knowledge
- b) Security - Creating trust and confidence through collaboration
- c) Diversity - Promoting multilingualism and local content
- d) Access - Internet Connectivity: Policy and Cost Capacity-building will be a crosscutting feature.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

*The Executive Director of UCC, Mr Patrick Masambu* said among the issues that Uganda needed to address were the establishment of Internet infrastructure within the country, as well as establishing a legal framework to cater for cyber activities, data protection and privacy. There was also need to address the role of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in improving Internet Governance, and to address the socio-economic implications of ICT. The workshop would create awareness of Africa's issues at Athens and identify those that Uganda would present at the inaugural IGF, Masambu said.

*Nii Quaynor, convener of AfNOG*, said the African Technical Internet Community had for more than a decade ago given hope to Africa and subsequently won the global Internet Governance struggle. He said African stakeholders needed to be mindful that the ability to act in whatever governance influencing role and as what stakeholder type, may itself be determined by other environmental factors including economic, social and the educational capacity of the individual, business, community or government. Accordingly, an attempt to deal entirely with governance and all stakeholders would defy the interest of flexibly evolving an organic system of self-governance from its simplest to its most complexes.

Quaynor said what needs to be governed about the Internet would evolve from time to time in tandem with changes in the stakeholder community and technology. Prior to the incorporation of ICANN in November 1998 through its pre-cursor IAHC, there were no functioning multi-stakeholder policy development institutions and bottom-up policy development processes in ICT. Telecom policies had been the preserve of governments in concert with an International Telecommunications Union (ITU) regulatory regime. But then there was adoption of multistakeholder participation by the United Nations ICT Task Force (UNICTTF) in November 2001 following a partner program - DotForce - which also used multi-stakeholders in the private sector, civil society, governments and multi-lateral organisations. Quaynor said though WSIS process courted multi-stakeholder participation, it fell short but re-adopted it in composition of IGF.

Quaynor said the predominant systems of government-led telecom policy meant a centralised organisation since the governance system was itself extremely centralised with government at the helm of policy decision, instead of industry or civil society. Accordingly, the stability of the Internet had come from its decentralised, edge-oriented nature reflected in the existing technical institutions and organisations. But a new “Governance Concept” was necessary: It had to assure the ability to keep the centre of things simple and have the more complex things performed at the edges near where human interaction is desired. He said the growth of the Internet has been through grassroots and peer supporting mechanisms that take knowledge to the frontiers. For this reason a façade of a free market force with direct government or inter-governmental oversight of the world's abstract Internet resources may not be a tenable option.

Quaynor also made the case for “dotAfrica” as a sponsored Top Level Domain (TLD) for African interests. It would be a not-for-profit company to be registered under the name dotAfrica Limited. Its members would include AfNOG, AfriNIC, AfTLD, (Pan African) ICT associations, African businesses, African Union, etc, and it would target 100,000 "name.africa" or "nom.afrique" subscribers.

***The Minister of State for ICTs, Hon. Alintuma Nsambu*** said there was a need for Ugandan stakeholders to ensure that the Internet was governed according to the

principles set by WSIS. He recalled that WSIS expressed the desire to “build a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilise and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, premised on the purposes and principles of the UN and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”.

Nsambu, who represented ICT Minister Dr Ham Mulira, said Uganda needed to prioritise the adoption of technologies that are appropriate for the country’s needs. He regretted that Internet cafes in Uganda do not have filters, so children can easily access pornography through these public access points.

**Patrick Mwesigwa, Technical Manager of UCC**, presented a report from the African Countries Workshop on the IGF, which took place in Addis Abba, Ethiopia, in July 2006. That workshop, which was organised by UNECA to sensitise policy makers, academia and private sector from African countries on IG issues in preparation for the Athens IGF, reaffirmed African commitment to the themes for Athens and agreed as follows:

- 1) *Capacity Building* should be facilitated at all levels - technical, academic, professional, policy makers, regulators, legal, business and users of the Internet using national and regional expertise and resources;
- 2) *Access*: Inclusive access to the Internet should be enabled through national/regional policies and international cooperation mechanisms, so as to ensure, Affordable internet connectivity for everyone being facilitated through reduction of international connectivity cost;
- 3) *Security*: Security of the Internet is crucial for the stability of the network and its further development. Also crucial for building confidence among users and attracting uptake especially of e-commerce applications.
- 4) *Diversity of the Internet* will facilitate its development in Africa and promote development of relevant local content;
- 5) *Openness of the Internet* will empower access to knowledge and allow free flow of information and promote human development

Mwesigwa said among the key recommendations reached at the Addis Abba meeting were the need for African countries to mainstream Internet Governance public policy issues in their national ICT4D processes, policies and action plans, an the promotion of technical solutions that will reduce capital flight in use of internet and increase intra-regional exchange of internet traffic among African countries. The workshop also recommended that UNECA establishes a mechanism for capacity building in African countries in relation to processes of redelegation of ccTLD, and that it also facilitates cooperation among African countries on Internet governance issues

***Dr. Turahi David of the ICT Ministry*** outlined the key action lines of the WSIS Action Plan that Uganda needs to attend to. These included the following:

1. Role of Governments and all stakeholders in promotion of ICTs for development, under which was the need to develop national e-strategies, including the necessary human capacity building by 2005, and establishment of one Public-Private Partnership or Multi-stakeholder partnership as a showcase for future action.
2. Information and Communication infrastructure an essential foundation of the IS: Take action in order to support an enabling and competitive environment for the necessary investment in ICT infrastructure and for the development of new services. The new communications policy (yet to be announced) takes care of this.
3. Access to information and knowledge: Develop policy guidelines for development & promotion of public domain information, which have implications for the Official Secrets Act, Access to information Bill, among others; and create need for establishing multi-purpose community public access at affordable rates or free of charge.
4. Capacity building: Develop domestic policies to ensure that ICTs are fully integrated in education and training at all levels including in curriculum development, teacher training, institutional administration and management & in support of the concept of lifelong learning
5. Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs; Prevent the use of information resources and technologies for criminal and terrorist purposes while respecting human rights. The Computer Crimes Bill is ready for presentation to Cabinet by MOWHC.
6. Enabling Environment: Use ICTs to support good governance, correct market failures, maintain fair competition, to attract investment, to enhance the development of the ICT infrastructure and applications, to maximise economic and social benefits, and to serve national priorities.
7. Develop ICT applications in the areas of government operations, and services, health care and health information, education and training, employment, job creation, business, agriculture, transport, environmental protection and management of natural resources, disaster prevention, and culture, and to promote eradication of poverty and other agreed development goals.
8. Cultural diversity identity, linguistic diversity and local content: Accord high priority to the creation, dissemination and preservation of

educational, scientific, cultural and recreational content in diverse languages and formats so as to build an inclusive Information Society in Uganda.

9. Media: Freedom to seek, receive, impart and use information for the creation, accumulation and dissemination of knowledge; media should responsibly use and treat information with the highest ethical and professional standards.
10. Ethical Dimensions of the IS: The use of ICTs and content creation should respect human rights and fundamental freedoms of others, including personal privacy, and the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion in conformity with relevant international instruments.

International and regional cooperation: Raise the relative priority of ICT projects in requests for international cooperation and assistance on infrastructure development projects from developed countries and international financial institutions.

***Dr Dorothy Okello, Coordinator of WOUGNET***, presented proposals on the formation of Uganda's National Internet Governance Forum (NIGF). She recalled that in August 2005, an Internet Governance Public Consultative Meeting agreed on establishment of an NIGF Committee to foster Uganda's needs. In December 2005, a public seminar on "Post-WSIS and Uganda's Way Forward" proposed that a multistakeholder WSIS Implementation Committee (MS-WSIS-IC) be created to study the recommended WSIS action lines as well as come up with a WSIS implementation, monitoring and evaluation strategy. Subsequently, at a UCC-organised Public Forum in March 2006, the need for an all-inclusive NIGF was emphasised. The NIGF would discuss issues and strategies for fostering Internet development in Uganda. It would seek to incorporate and build upon the mandate of the global IGF as far as is locally appropriate and feasible.

Okello presented proposals on the membership, structure and functioning of the NIGF, as well as the priorities it should address. Most of the proposals were passed by the meeting, but its priorities were amended to include: 1) enhancing cooperation between the private sector and policy makers to improve Internet Governance in the area of curbing cyber crimes, pornography and other harmful content; 2) Advocating for reduction of interconnection and connection costs; 3) Developing and enhancing partnerships with organisations with similar mandated in the region; and 4) Encouraging participation of local (or grassroots) communities in generation and exchange of local/indigenous knowledge using ICTs.

An NIGF Secretariat supported by an Advisory Board will coordinate the work of the proposed NIGF. The meeting raised the number of Advisory Board members from 10 to 12, with the additional members to come from the Research and Academic communities. The government, private sector and civil society will have two representatives each, while two will come from the community of actors involved in technical aspects of Internet development and management. Others members will be persons with gender and ICT expertise. The members will have a two years' non-renewable mandate.

An **NIGF Interim Advisory Team** was formed to act for six months. Its members are:

- 1) Dr Dorothy Okello (WOUGNET) who is the chair of the team.
- 2) Mr Yusuf Sewanyana (Uganda Police in charge of IT)
- 3) Mr Emma Mbaine (Motese International)
- 4) Ms Lillian Nalwoga (CIPESA)
- 5) Mr Patrick Mwesigwa (UCC)
- 6) Dr Turahi (Ministry of ICT)
- 7) Ken Mwai (ISP Association)

The team can temporarily be contacted on email: [ictpolicy@wougnet.org](mailto:ictpolicy@wougnet.org) but will communicate other contact details in due course.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

Among the issues raised during discussions were:

- The need for academics and researchers to be included on the NIGF team
- The need for police/ security agencies to be part of the NIGF as they are currently launching strategies to fight cyber crime;
- How the NIGF will be funded and whether those who want to be members of the NIGF advisory body should pay subscription fees;
  - The need for Uganda to do more to extend ICT services in rural areas;
  - What the Ministry for ICT was doing to encourage business process outsourcing?
- How to curb cyber crime without infringing on freedom of expression and media freedom;
- The need to address gender issued and other social issues in the NIGF.

## MAPPING PRIORITY ISSUES

The workshop formed four groups which addressed each of the four broad themes of Africa and Uganda's issues at the IGF – Openness, Security, Diversity, and Access. The group work was discussed and adopted by the plenary.

Theme	Issues	Priorities	Strategies
<i>Openness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right to freely create, receive and impart information.</li> <li>• Irresponsibility in journalism/publishing/ expressions of opinions</li> <li>• Widespread harmful content like pornography and hate speech that needs to be controlled</li> <li>• Challenge of cyber crime and need for laws and institutions to combat it</li> <li>• Need for technologies that allow citizens to be creators of Internet content and members of online communities, such as Web 2.0.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting usage of technologies that enhance openness, for instance Web2.0 tools like Wikis and blogs</li> <li>• Right to freely create and access information, but do it responsibly. Media freedom is recognized as a key aspect of this.</li> <li>• Make regulations against 'harmful content' like hate speech and pornography. But there should be clear laid-down procedures on how to declare content 'harmful' and controlling it, including which the stakeholders are that should play a role in this.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness on laws governing freedom of expression and freedom of the media</li> <li>• Regulate harmful content</li> <li>• Enhanced media freedom and media responsibility</li> <li>• Civil society should be vigilant in promoting freedom of expression and educating the public, media and government on conforming to best practices in regulating content without unduly infringing on freedoms</li> </ul>
<i>Security</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privacy (confidentiality identity theft) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Hacking (penetration)</li> <li>– Digital signatures</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Authentication of the source Verification and validation</li> <li>• Content &amp; Protection of users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Abuse (personal)</li> <li>– Aprehension of perpetrators</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Integrity (Data i.e financial)</li> <li>• Government intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government legislation</li> <li>• Intellectual property rights protection</li> <li>• Adoption of cryptographic technology</li> <li>• Filtering content on public infrastructure</li> <li>• Developing mechanisms of protecting the user</li> <li>• Standardise systems with built in security</li> <li>• Aprehension mechanisms</li> <li>• Blacklisting rouge sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public access points to adopt url filtering</li> <li>• Child protection unit for cyber crime to be absolved into existing laws</li> <li>• Clasification of public cafes in terms of adult and family licencing.</li> <li>• Public sensitisation •Government's role needs to be defined.</li> </ul>

Theme	Issues	Priorities	Strategies
<b>Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language and culture diversity</li> <li>• Locally relevant technology/ local content</li> <li>• Leadership an innovation in generating content</li> <li>• Education and awareness on promoting diversity</li> <li>• Encouraging participation of local (or grassroots) communities in generation and exchange of local/indigenous knowledge using ICTs</li> <li>• Conflict of free flow of information that helps researchers and protective IPR regimes that help private sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging local innovation and decentralised leadership on ICT</li> <li>• locally relevant technology</li> <li>• Education and awareness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strategies</b> to achieve these should include national incentive programme by government to encourage innovation; carrying out education and awareness raising programmes by government; involving young people in all ICT aspects (formulation, implementation and evaluation); and putting in place a framework for increasing participation in ICT</li> </ul>
<b>Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are high taxes; costs of equipment and bandwidth are too high.</li> <li>• Awareness of issues is low: literacy and education, language and knowledge.</li> <li>• Infrastructure: penetration, cabling and wireless connections</li> <li>• Alternative sources of energy e.g. solar need to be investigated especially for rural connectivity</li> <li>• Policy: strengthening regulatory bodies for quality services; liberalisation of services</li> <li>• Communication barriers – physical, security, terrain</li> <li>• Cheaper wireless access systems needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need low cost and reliable equipment and service</li> <li>• Cheaper wireless access system should be promoted</li> <li>• Public-Private Partnerships be undertaken to improve accessibility to and affordability of Internet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government should promote multistakeholder dialogue on people-centred policies</li> <li>• Strengthen regulatory body to monitor quality of service provided by ISPs</li> <li>• Conduct forums at grassroots (at least district level) to educate people on development potential of ICT and the Internet</li> </ul>