



REPORT ON

GHANA INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM (IGF)

2022

**THEME: “FOSTERING DIGITAL INCLUSION AND
SAFEGUARDING INTERNET RIGHTS.”**

ACCRA, GHANA.

2022

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Executive Summary

The Ghana Domain Name Registry (GDNR) together with the Internet Society Ghana Chapter under the auspices of the Ministry of Communications and Digitalisation convened the 2022 edition of the Ghana Internet Governance Forum (IGF) themed “Fostering digital inclusion and safeguarding Internet rights”. The year’s IGF was a hybrid event and the multistakeholder approach of involving all stakeholders of the Internet was used to conduct the event successfully. Issues on the Internet such as inclusivity, accessibility, and individual rights were discussed at the meeting.

The Ghana IGF saw a significant number of persons participating and deliberating on issues on the Internet in Ghana as well as contributions from participants.

List of Acronyms

ICT Information Communication Technology IGF Internet Governance Forum IT
Information Technology MAG Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group SME Small and
Medium-scale Enterprise

Introduction

The IGF is a forum where individuals and participants gather to discuss issues of the Internet. This meeting offers a unique space for an amazing range of people to share information and develop solutions. The 2022 edition of the Ghana IGF was a hybrid event under the theme “Fostering Digital Inclusion and safeguarding Internet rights”. It was held on Friday, 20th May 2022. The Ghana IGF saw about 110 participants joining in on the meeting with discussions centered around the theme to educate and inform participants on related issues.

The Ghana IGF was organized by the Ghana Domain Name Registry under the auspices of the Ministry of Communications and Digitalisation and the Internet Society Ghana Chapter and its local stakeholders.

The report is divided into sessions with the topics discussed at the forum including recommendations.

Objectives of Ghana IGF

- To open conversations aimed at making the Internet accessible, free, secure, and open for Ghanaians
- Nurture a multi-stakeholder community of defenders and protectors of the Internet
- Develop a communique that will be presented to the government for review and possible adoption

Opening Remarks

This session commenced with the Ghana IGF coordinator Nana Kofi Asafu-Aidoo giving the opening remarks. He welcomed everyone to the forum and touched on the issues of inclusion. He also mentioned that the Internet and technology as a whole are vital to everyone’s use and the covid19 pandemic was a clear indication of its importance. He stated that this year’s forum would address issues of inclusivity and issues of human rights. The forum would constitute different plenaries to deliberate on the topics that

intersect human rights and technology. The first keynote address was given by Professor Nii Narku Quaynor. He spoke mainly on digital inclusion but touched on these points;

- ❖ Internet infrastructure must move towards rural areas as well and not be overly built-in urban areas. Considering that, donors must make sure the infrastructure is built-in communities.
- ❖ It is also prudent for everyone to know how MAG IGF Africa is moved, how open the formation process is, and what constitutes the committee. • Every stakeholder group must be represented in every IGF decision making process.
- ❖ Every Internet actor must be involved.
- ❖ There must be a good balance and representation in the Internet governance space and young people must be encouraged to participate.
- ❖ There must be a scope of work and it must be accessible and open to everyone.

He noted that Africans did not like sharing opportunities among themselves which is mostly affecting us more negatively than positively. He also emphasized that a multistakeholder approach should be adopted and encouraged.

The second keynote speaker, Madam Mary Uduma also supported the points made by Professor Quaynor. She added that there should not be an exclusion in the Internet ecosystem. The youth must build digital skills for their development. She concluded by saying that Internet infrastructure must be kept safe all the time.

Session Summary

Topic: Digital Inclusion Landscape and challenges in Ghana

Medium: Panel Discussion

Format: Hybrid

Session moderator: Nadia Owusu

Speakers: Mr. Haruna Mohammed, National Information Technology Agency (NITA)
Ms. Florence Toffa, Mobile Web Ghana

Mr. Olusegun H. Olugile, President of Global Network for Cyber Solution
Mr. Yahaya Zakaria Osman, Director of Operations, GIFEC

Session Report

The key issue addressed in this discussion were some challenges of digital inclusion and how they can collaborate with government SMEs and the private sector to ensure the promotion of digital inclusion in Ghana. Another key issue raised was how the African digital initiative skills conference was bridging the digital inclusion and promoting offline sessions.

Ms. Florence Toffa of Mobile Web Ghana touched on one of the flagship projects which was the African digital skills held as a three-day conference conducted in November. She explained that it is a platform for learning and sharing digital skills. She also highlighted some statistics that the what the institution did in the year 2019 and about 230 million jobs made available in sub-Saharan Africa and that these jobs would not be available until they require some form of digital skills by 2020 to enable create about 4 billion opportunities in the digital skills specifically in Ghana. She added that the African digital skills are one of the projects they are implementing to bridge this gap and to ensure that people can learn specifically, basic advanced skills online.

The second speaker, Mr. Yahaya Osman from GIFEC mentioned that they have a lot of avenues for people who are not part of the digital landscape and that they have close to 270 Community assistance Centers that they have provided with a minimum of 15 computers and accessories to train people. He said in terms of inclusiveness, they looked at telephony and Internet access so they have currently deployed 345 sites that are now passing traffic and by the end of the second quarter they are looking

at 700 sites that will pass traffic and they have targeted sites which have provided 3.5 million people with telephony access and Internet.

Mr. Olusegun H. Olugile touched on the SME perspective and what can be done in response to the Internet. He highlighted data extensions and the fact we do not have

Internet infrastructure put in place where people can access the Internet. He mentioned that substantial investment in ensuring that the Internet infrastructures and facilities can be available so that various policy initiatives and regulatory interventions can encourage our sector to invest.

Recommendations

Ms. Florence Toffa recommended that there is the need to make capacity building for all individuals on digital inclusion, meaning that whether the person is physically challenged they should be able to have access to the Internet and be able to empower themselves in different areas of their lives. She also talked about how they will educate and empower people economically and have them be great change-makers in the future.

Mr. Yahaya Osman recommended that the available SMEs can take advantage of people who would be able to use the community ICT centers to acquire digital skills for them to access government services. He also said in terms of challenges the universal service fund is to ensure that all individuals in Ghana should become a part of the digital space so that they will continue to do digital skills training to provide the necessary infrastructure to create avenues to educate people.

Session Summary 2

Topic: How to ensure Digital Security on the Internet?

Medium: Panel Discussion

Format: Hybrid

Session moderator: Akinremi Peter Taipei

Speakers: Mr. Segun H. Olugbile, President, Global Network for Cyber solution

Mr. Joseph Quaye, Lead, Cyber Security e-Crime Bureau

Dr. Emmanuel Ahene, KNUST Cyber Security Authority

Session Report

Key Issues Raised:

1. Cyberculture and its contribution to digital safety.

2. The role citizens play in cyber security.
3. Mitigating the impact of cyber espionage in our environment.
4. The role of government and service providers in digital security.
5. The importance of awareness creation.

Mr. Olugbile addressed the feasibility of securing the Internet, noting that there's a surface layer where most users are and a dark layer where all sorts of malicious activities happen, and concluded that security could only be partially ensured. The cyber environment in Africa was noted to be lacking a proper digital culture and the responsible use of the Internet that came with it, leading to an unsafe experience for users due to all the vulnerabilities present. Users are all too quick to pick up a device or access the Internet without much consideration of security or the kind of access these devices have because of the culture here. The guidelines are present but the culture needs to be formed to allow the average user to engage them, so it becomes a challenge of creating that cyber culture through awareness.

Mr. Quaye also agreed with the points raised by Mr. Olugbile and he highlighted the importance of the average user being aware of the functions of the digital devices we use. Not only the functions but also the risk associated with using these devices. It was noted that the awareness of the functions and the risk would better guide the average user's actions, with some curiosity while navigating instead of accepting whatever is presented. Insisting that the average user should pay better attention to things like terms & conditions. He went further to suggest that effective awareness programs relating to using Internet resources needed to be designed. Information should be presented in relevant local languages, targeting places the general public such as religious institutions or schools to help spread information. He commented on the importance of a digital security framework to ensure digital security, that countries needed laws and organizations needed relevant policies to serve as guides.

Dr. Ahene highlighted the increase in Internet users in the last two years and the possibility of an even further increase in years to come. It was noted that there is a three-way responsibility involving the user, the policymakers and the service providers. Safer Internet navigation can be achieved by better cooperation among these parties because espionage would try to target them individually. Server providers could issue technical warnings; governments could focus on mass education on some of these dangers. In relation to awareness, he mentioned a training program KNUST was currently undergoing to effectively create awareness on cyber security. He also

touched on the precarious decision of creating stronger online laws, citing the “Great Firewall of China” and agreeing that it had both its advantages and disadvantages. He also believed that it would be best if education institutions eventually included cyber security training in standard curriculums for all to be made aware of its importance.

Session Summary 3

Topic: Stakeholders’ participation in achieving a safer digital society in Ghana.

Medium: Panel Discussion

Format: Hybrid

Session moderator: Lily Edinam Botsyoe

Speakers: Mrs Awo Aidam Amenyah – Africa Child Online Protection

Ms. Thoko Miya – South Africa Youth IGF

Mrs. Dora Mawutor – Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA)

Mr. Emmanuel Gadasu – Data Protection Expert

Session report

Ms. Thoko Miya started by discussing the impact of digital stakeholders, who they are, and the role they play. She mentioned the importance of understanding the context of digital transformation in both the area of research, impact, and analysis.

She again mentioned that digital transformation had received a lot of attention in recent years and the case of Africa, it was not possible to do so without looking at the role of entrepreneurship, the role of technological advancement, and other stakeholder groups to understand how stakeholder influence the agenda towards Internet Governance and digital transformation. She also said it’s important to look at the role of partnership and its impact on value chain creation.

Mrs Awo Aidam Amenyah also contributed to the discussion by highlighting on the need for stakeholders who are interactive specifically looking at safety. She mentioned three key things about safety: prevention, protection and proactive change. She also said that industry is critical in conservation, and how safety is being embedded in

designs for consumers. She again mentioned the need to look at policymakers, urging them to make policies that are proactive enough to be able to reflect the trend of growth with regards to technology and that the policies should also focus on entrepreneurs because app designers are private sector players. Lastly, she highlighted the need for a framework to look at what is being designed and who are the audience.

Mr. Emmanuel Gadasu started with the regulatory perspective by saying that a lot of data are being collected and some even without the user's consent. He mentioned that there's the need for a regulatory framework to regulate the data controllers so that they use the data they collect for the right purpose for which they were collected. Agencies need to ensure that the organization collecting data protect users regardless of their side. He raised questions on how do they regulate these actors? Are there ways to get those who have not registered with the right agencies? How do we ensure organizations comply with regulations?

Ms. Dora Mawutor also mentioned how the government can help come up with policies that promote the safety of online users. She mentioned that the Data Protection Act, Cyber Security Act, and other legislation such as the electronic communication and electronic transaction act have some form of provisions for regulatory guidelines on how industries or developers should operate. She added the issue of industry players having robust infrastructure that can help guarantee safety. She again mentioned the role civil society organizations engaged to ensure the capacity building of end users to use social media responsibly. Thus, the media's role in sensitization, and academia's role in research to help in policy, advocacy, and informing sensitization efforts.

Recommendations

The speakers outlined some recommendations

1. The importance of using the discussions not only for engagement but also for reference purposes, knowledge sharing, and driving impact for Africa.
2. Consider IGF in local languages to be able to get local communities involved in the processes.
3. Frameworks should be developed to protect Musers' safety online and guidelines for technology products

Session Summary 4

Topic: The Role of Government in digital inclusion (Persons with Disabilities, underserved and unserved communities)

Medium: Panel Discussion

Format: Hybrid

Session moderator: Prosper Toranyi

Speakers: Mr. Samuel Antwi Gyekyi – Deputy Director, Ministry of communication, Mr. Kojo Oteng Owusu – Convener, Civil Society platform on SDGs Dr. Millicent Agangiba – Inclusive Tech Group.

Mr. Nicholas Lenin Anane Agyei – Queen Mary, University of London.

Session Report

The session started with Mr. Kojo Owusu, defining what disability is with respect to the United Nation's definition, which explained disability as the inability to access facilities in the society.

Mr. Nicholas Lenin Anane Agyei raised the issue of the absence of signing on our national television.

Dr. Millicent of the Inclusive Tech group also touched on the cost of data for the underserved and unserved societies.

Mr. Samuel Antwi Gyekyi, from the Ministry of communications and Digitalisation, touted the government's policies and programs to protect the users of the Internet in Ghana.

Mr. Kojo Owusu opened this session by raising awareness of what disability was. Thus, most Ghanaians may be able to walk, and talk but are disabled with respect to the digital conversation because they are unable to access some websites, services, or thriving digital landscape. He gave an instance where governments did not factor in the use of sign language as a technique to help children with hearing disabilities at the E-learning sessions during the Covid Pandemic.

Mr. Gyekyi, the second speaker, touted the government's policies, like the Girls in ICT training happening mostly in the underserved and unserved societies as a way of

bridging the digital gap between societies. He said over 1000s of young ladies have completed the course and the best have been rewarded with laptops to continue their courses. He talked about the passage of the Cyber Security Act to protect the users of Internet in the country. He again talked about the flexibility of the Ghana digital addressing system that has given everyone, including persons with disabilities to locate their homes, and workplaces at ease.

Dr. Millicent Agangiba, touched on accessibility policy, internet affordability, and the high prices of assistive technologies and tools. With respect to Internet affordability, she talked about the high prices of data bundles which are highly impossible for most people living with disabilities to afford. The high cost of assistive tools to aid persons with disabilities is also a challenge to talk about. Her major concern was the accessibility policy. She was worried developers don't consider persons living with disabilities before developing a website. So, there's always a challenge with either accessing websites, affording data bundles, or buying assistive tools like the screen reader to make using the internet easier for people living with disabilities and the underserved and unserved communities.

Mr. Agyei, who was the last speaker raised concerns about how most of the service providers and government agencies treat digital inclusion as just an addon and not the bare minimum. Most government agencies and private entities do not go the extra mile to have their facilities inclined with the needs of persons with disabilities.

Recommendations

Mr. Owusu admonished government to put in effort and investment which will require extra cost including signing on our national television and prioritizing digital inclusion. Mr. Nicholas Lenin Anane Agyei admonished the government to make it a requirement to factor in ways for persons with disabilities can access all digital services. He again advised the government to set a minimum standard for policymakers, web developers, and operators to include persons with disabilities in their developments. Mr. Samuel Antwi Gyekyi praised the government for setting up a cyber-security Act to protect Ghanaians including those living with disabilities. He again talked about the fact that more computers and ICT laps have been set up in some schools in underserved and unserved communities. He also gave assurance

that there will be a follow-up on the girls being trained in ICT to record their progress after the training. In response to the prices of data, he said most government academic institutions have free WIFI to be used by students. He finally admitted that there is more the government will do to bridge the digital gap between the underserved communities and the cities.

Dr. Millicent recommended regulatory pricing of assistive technologies and tools to make them affordable for its users. He also asked the government to work on the pricing of data bundles by making them affordable to persons with disabilities. She then emphasized on the need for government to pay attention to accessibility policy when awarding a contract to digital firms and developers.

Closing Remarks

Mrs. Maud Adjeley Ashong Elliot, the Vice President of Internet Society in her closing remarks expressed her gratitude to everyone on the call, especially the speakers. She took advantage of the opportunity to invite all those on the call to the West Africa IGF which will be happening in Ghana from 26th - 27th of May, 2022.

Lessons Learnt

- ❖ A culture of awareness on using devices on the Internet must be formed among us to ensure safety online.
- ❖ Frameworks must be developed for users online and the manufacture of technology devices.
- ❖ More entrepreneurs should be involved in the IGF discussions since they contribute more to digital transformation.
- ❖ The need for a framework/policy to regulate data information collectors on the use of individual's personal data.
- ❖ More training on ICT to the underserved and unserved communities • People with a disability must be considered when developing websites and the accessibility policy must be noted.
- ❖ Internet should be made accessible to all people anywhere in the country.

Conclusion

The Ghana IGF saw deliberations from individuals from the Internet ecosystem sharing their views on issues pertinent to Ghana as well as solutions towards curbing these issues. The Ghana IGF successfully came to an end after a series of interesting discussions.