Internet Governance and Information Society: developing an African strategy- An agenda for African MPs

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14 October 2009

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APC

About APC

- International membership organisation supporting the use of the internet for development, women's empowerment and social equality – est. 1990 and with the UN and national partners the first provider of email in Africa

- 14 members in Africa in Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Senegal, Egypt, Cameroun, Nigeria and Congo.

- Policy advocacy and knowledge building – ICT policy handbook and curriculum

Current processes and institutions

- ICANN (important to consider the GAC)
- ccTLDs
- NROs – Number Resource Organisations (AfriNIC)
- ITU – International Telecommunications Union
- IGF – Internet Governance Forum
- African Union
- OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

Forthcoming events to be aware of

- Internet Governance Forum - Sharm el Sheik, Egypt – Nov 2009

- African Union – African Information Society Conference Addis Ababa Jan 2010

- Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) – Nairobi March 2010

- APKN Plenary Conference: Parliaments of the Information Society, March 2010

CcTLDs (country code top level domains)

- Allocates domain names under the country code, for example, www.zamnet.zm (Zambia)

- Needs to be independent, reliable, affordable and able to promote the use of the country code

- Important to not be under government control as governments sometimes misuse their power by 'removing' the domain names of opponents

Regional Internet Registries - AfriNIC

- Assigns IP (internet protocol) numbers
- Plays an important capacity building role

ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers)

- Responsible for 3 sets of unique identifiers for the internet:

  - Domain names e.g. www.apc.org particularly generic Top Level Domains like .com, .org and .info

  - IP addresses (numerical identifiers

  - Port and parameter numbers

- Originally established to play a technical role, but this evolved into a regulatory role and ICANN decisions influence market structure, and conditions for market entry in the area of

ICANN

- Based in California and registered as a not-for-profit organisation

- Until recently under oversight of the US government – now greatly reduced

- Who has the power? The ICANN board, and the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)

- What to watch out for? Anti-competitive practices, e.g. barriers to market entry for African business

- Participation at all levels from African stakeholders (government, civil society,

IGF – Internet Governance Forum

- Annual multi-stakeholder forum for public policy IG debate established by intergovernmental agreement in the WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society

- Initial term ends in 2010.. might continue.. might not

- Has evolved and now very significant regional and national IGFs are feeding into the global IGF (this year in Egypt in November)

The IGF going forward

- Support is continuation.. it is the only space of its kind where all stakeholders can talk about internet development and policy

- Some international bodies and governments are against its continuation (China for example)

- We need more regional and national IGFs. The SADC region should catch up with East Africa

How might MPs approach Internet Governance?

- Take a broad view… don't get lost in specifics such as ICANN, IP numbers, or the threat of harmful content on children, or cybercrime

- Focus on the enabling potential of the internet rather than on controlling it. This involves ensuring that internet governance

BUT also learn, make sure you have a basic understanding of:

- Institutions involved

- New issues.. such as ICTs and climate change, mobile internet, banking etc.

- Types of decisions and their implications on economic and social development

- Spaces where internet governance issues are debate

Suggested activities for MPs

- Identify national resource people and organisations you can learn from

- Use committees to ensure that government reports regularly to parliament on its IG activities

- Watch out for vendor interference

- Encourage your government to participate in the governmental advisory committee of ICANN (GAC) and make sure that you country's GAC member reports to parliament

- Be aware of other national participation in IG

Suggested activities for the APKN ICT working group

- Knowledge building.. through curriculum, workshops, briefings

- Online dialogue on key issues, such as broadband, cybercrime, mobile internet

- Regional cooperation and harmonisation

- Dialogue, and debate e.g. through national and regional internet governance forums

Never doubt the potential of information and communications exchange to empower people and generate development!

Thank you
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