

**5th African IGF,
Durban, South Africa, 16 - 18 October 2016**

**Opening remarks by Mr. Chengetai Masango, IGF Secretariat
Opening Session, 16 October 2016, 09:00 – 10:15 am UTC+2**

Your Excellencies,
Honorable delegates,
Distinguished Experts,
Colleagues present on-site and online,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the United Nations Secretariat for the Internet Governance Forum , I would like to congratulate you for organizing the 5th African regional IGF (particularly African Union Commission / United Nations Commission for Africa, APC and other organizers showing a community effort . It is an honor to be here at the African IGF and many thanks for inviting me, for your warm welcome and hospitality.

Also, allow me to thank the Government of South Africa, respectively, for hosting this important meeting.

As you know, the IGF is a multistakeholder forum for policy dialogue in an open, inclusive and multistakeholder environment, on issues pertaining to Internet, that was established in 2006 by the World Summit on Information Society WSIS and convened by the United Nations Secretariat General, the IGF Secretariat's institutional home is with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs DESA.

The IGF's mandate is derived from paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda and its main task is 'to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet for the benefit of all.

There are currently 65 existing IGF initiatives on national, sub-regional and regional level. It has been said many times that one size does not fit all as fair as INTERNET Governance is concerned. (as long as the basic tenants are kept – that of openness, inclusiveness, and multistakeholderism.)

The Internet penetration in Africa 28% and 49% for the world. Therefore Africa still has some catching up to do. And it can be done.

There are general policy challenges but each region has its own unique challenges as well. Africa has a lot of knowledge and best practices it can share with the world and vice versa.

Regional and national IGF's of Africa has a strong bond of collaboration and support with the global IGF. Excellent organization of the multistakeholder discussion forum on Internet Governance matters in Africa for Africans citizens exists for now five years, and it produces many significant outputs and

recommendations that later on shaped the way of progress of Internet for the people of this part of the world.

It also gave valuable feedback and lessons for the global IGF, especially serving as a model for stakeholder engagement across the region and beyond, Best practices in IXP's implementation, and for the connecting the Next Billion (CNB) input and multistakeholder advocacy for Internet improvements. We can all learn from our differences and our commonalities . Everyone has something to contribute.

There are still many things to be done, especially now as we all aim at achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Developing Goals, that significantly depends on a strong ICT capacity for economic and social development, and related to this on good Internet policies.

The same was reaffirmed by the UN member states in December last year, when the World Summit on Information Society Review (WSIS+10) outcome document, was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. The document extended the IGF mandate for another 10 years, giving us all an opportunity to improve our work, to come up with more comprehensive discussions and working modalities for producing tangible results.

In order to make a global change, we need to start from our own homes and understand what are the biggest issues. Increasing participation, of those that understand especially from the developing countries, is critically important if we want to maximize the impacts of our work, and you, dear colleagues, are the key partner in this.

I will also kindly use this opportunity to invite you all, especially government representatives to attend the upcoming IGF annual meeting, that will take place in Guadalajara in Mexico from 6 to 9 December.

This year's overarching theme that is: '***Enabling Inclusive and Sustainable Growth***'.

We hope that you will all take active participation at this year's IGF, if not on-site, then by using all benefits of having Internet access and participating online.

I wish you a very productive discussing and a successful meeting.

Thank you.