THE ROLES OF INTERNET GOVERNANCE IN SUSTEINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (IG4SDGs)

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THE ROLES OF IG IN SDGs

Introduction

- The concept of referring the World as a global village is partially in agreement with the technology analogy of viewing the World as a System, where a defect or a flaw in one part will affect the other part of the system, or the entire system.

- Leaning on the technology analogy, Internet Governance therefore serves as a shield behind ICTs – which connect the world (as a system) together with enormous resources and capabilities that drive and sustain development within the system.

- **Please note carefully, my goal here is neither to talk about the roles of ICT nor the roles of Internet in the sustainable development, as we are all aware of these roles and there are abundant resources and information available.**

Discussion Objectives:

To examine the roles of Internet governance in achieving the SDGs, perhaps in the context of Afr

2015 World Bank Report on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) defines Sustainable Development as the country ability to recognize that rational national economic and social growth strategy must be both;

I. **Inclusive and environmentally healthy to address poverty**
II. **Build shared prosperity for the present generation, while**
III. **Striving continually to meet the needs of future generations.**

Determining Point of Intersection between IG & SDGS

There are some important policy questions we should really ask ourselves:

- *At what point does Internet Governance intersect with the SDGs?*
- *If there is really an intersection, what roles should IG play in facilitating the success of SDGs in Africa?*

Before moving forward, it is important to examine the working definition of IG in line with WSIS

RE-EXAMINING THE DEFINITION OF INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Learning from WSIS working definition of IG;

Internet governance is "the development and application by Governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and <u>use of the Internet</u>".

In this case,

''the use of the Internet for what? Basically for transforming Digital Divide into social inclusion for development.**
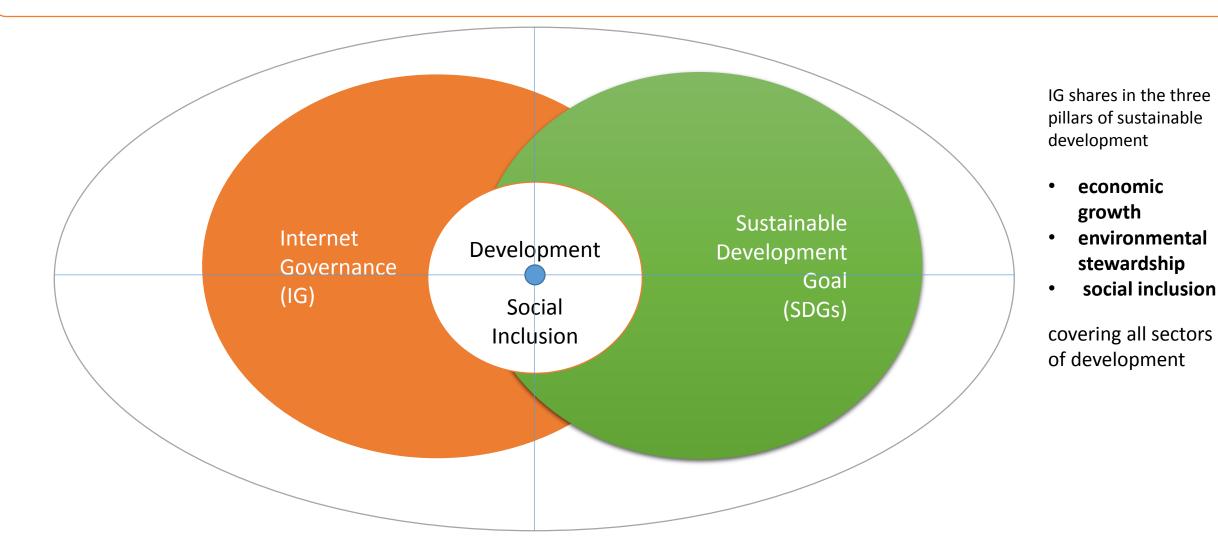
Locating Point of Intercession of IG and SDGs

One of the key objectives of Internet Governance is to create;

❑ a **pro-development policy tool, and inclusive environment**, which would enable **use of the Internet as an engine of development**. This is strategic point of Intercession of IG and SDGs

This intercession therefore permeates all the components of the SGDs and it is important to communicate this vital intercession in the outcome of this year African IG forum. (*i.e. implying that addressing the issues surrounding IG and implementing the outcome of IG policy process remains one of the most important success factors in achieving SDGs in Africa*.)

Logical Point of Intercession of IG and SDGs

Internet Governance (IG)

Development

Social Inclusion

Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs)

IG shares in the three pillars of sustainable development

- **economic growth**
- **environmental stewardship**
- **social inclusion**

covering all sectors of development

THE ROLES OF IG IN SDGs

We need to respond to this question;
In what context does the IG plays strategic roles in achieving SDGs?

Glaring Reality of the Power of Internet

- In the current dispensation, Access and use of the Internet has become as essential as the air we breathe, dynamically changing the way we interact or do business.
- Internet is redefining the relationship between government and the people, object and the people,
- Therefore, achieving SGDs would require a **systemic re-adjustment of societies** in conformity with the unfolding digital realities and opportunities provided by the Internet in the following specific contexts.

i.   **Transformed Society**
ii. **Dynamic Open Platform for community engagement**
iii. **Sustainable Governance**
iv. **Good Governance Mediation**
v.   **Capacity building of the key elements of the society**
vi. **Awareness, Outreach & access to information**

Transformed Society → Connected Society

(e.g. a Connected Society Realty (CSR) achievable through *engaging the IG-Policy Option for transforming society for SDGs*)

➢ ***The UN Agenda for Sustainable Development identifies ICTs and the Internet as horizontal enablers for development***. *Paragraph 9-c. sets an important goal for the international community (including Africa): "Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020".*

➢ **SDGs requires Broadband Enabled Society** to connect people with resources, government and policy process, program and project earmarked for development

➢ **Broadband connectivity is a dynamic reality that must be embraced for the preparation of Africa countries for the implementation of SDGs.** It is one of the bedrocks for implementing SDGs response or readiness plans.

➢ For instance, IGF produces a Policy Menu on Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion (CNB) which has a cross sectoral benefits that would impact SDGS, and help re-transform government strategic Social development master plan for inclusive development.

➢ **IG helps harness policy aimed at facilitating Internet infrastructural development/deployment, enhancing usability, empowering people with low income, and creating enabling/conducive environments for development, information sharing and access in the underserved communities**. Given ICTs and the Internet are so important to development, it is critical that policy options and strategies be tailored to local needs and specificities in line with the SGDs.

Dynamic Open Platform for community engagement
→ An Open Internet for SDGs

- **IGF consistently enabling a community framework for a global multi-stakeholders intervention that sustain an Open Internet regime with a shared global ownership under the multi-stakeholders governance mechanism.** The framework has become an important policy instrument for social transformation and inclusion needed for a community unity of purpose on SDGs.

- **An Open Internet is an open invitation for all to participate in community developmental program, in a bottom approach, inclusive and transparent manner where access to information remains <u>sacrosanct</u>.**

- **Access to information empower the people, stimulate participation, sustain the developmental programs, with opportunity for project monitoring and accountability**.

Sustainable Governance

→ IG as Catalyst for Sustainable Governance

- **IG is acting as a catalyst for SDGs, galvanising multi-stakeholder dialogue to discuss and address critical issues that would transform societ**y (issue such as Security, Access, Internet economy, Inclusiveness and diversity, innovative policies and best practices initiatives in strategic areas that would effectively impact SGDs. E.g. the current theme of IGF 2016 is centred on inclusive development which is one of the strategic frameworks for SDGs.

- **Sustainable development Goals ((SDGs) cannot be achieved without the Internet and knowledge diffusion, therefore, the outcomes of the Internet governance forum impact our ability to manage the social, environmental and economic factors of Sustainable Development.**

- *For instance, a correlation was established between IT and infant mortality. Low access countries had high infant mortality, meaning that improved internet services would result in better sustainable development.*

- This is the outcome of an important ISOC survey on measuring the impact of Internet governance on sustainable development and to explore the range of indicators needed to monitor whether internet policy and governance choices are leading to an Internet that is supporting social, environmental and economic goals, as well as innovations in accountability and governance, using some statistics related to sustainable development in countries with high need and low access to the internet by ISOC.

Good Governance Mediation

→ **Good governance remains critical part of the requirements for a transformed Society.**

- **In IG, sustainability of Internet is the bedrock of unity for enabling consensus, cooperation, and partnership, strengthening collaboration, and supporting multi-stakeholder mediation in the contentious social and economic policy issues**. *For examples, such as fundamental human rights, privacy, open data, gender issues, access to information and freedom of association, conflict resolution and peace building.*

- IG has capacity to help develop a unified response mechanism for addressing corruption, crime and prevention of socio-economic degradation and communicable diseases such as ebola etc. among key components of good governance.

Capacity building of key elements of the society
→ **Building Sustainable Capacity of Developing Countries.**

- **One of the key achievements of IGF is in building the capacity of the developing countries to engage in complex series of issues, and cross fertilization of skills. UN agencies such as UNDESA, ITU, UNESCO and UNCTAD cooperatively agreed that Internet and ICT would support all 17 SDGs**. IGF discussions and outcomes can be fed into WSIS action lines that support individual SDGs.

- IGF is a formidable platform to bridging knowledge gap and building citizens capacity across local communities to better understand the potential of ICTs and how access to the Internet can help fast-track regional and national SDGs implementations. e.g IG knowledge schools, fellowship programs, and other related events.

Useful reference: 10th IGF Main Session: Internet Economy and Sustainable Development IGF Day 2 - 11 November 2015 - 9:00-12:30; ***Transcript available here:*** *http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/187-igf-2015/transcripts-igf-2015/2854-2015-11-11-internet-economy-and-sustainable-development-main-meeting-hall*

Awareness, Outreach & access to information

→ **IG ecosystem as a tool and platform for SDGs awareness and outreaches**

- IG offers a robust and sustainable tools and platform for SDGs awareness and outreaches.

- The growth and robustness of IGF regional and national initiatives would further communicate multi-stakeholder partnership and support for the SGDs

Conclusion

As the African countries embark on the SDGs implementation strategy, Internet governance must be embraced as;
➢ A social development tool for community transformation
➢ A facilitator of pro-economic policies
➢ A key domain for facilitating multi-stakeholders consensus, and communicating sustainable development.

Our commitment to SDGs in Africa should follow and inform the regional active participation in Internet Governance dialogue.