Draft Charter of the
African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF)

6th December 2017

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1 Genesis of the African Internet Governance Charter

a) The African Internet Governance Charter was requested by participants of the Fourth African Internet Governance Forum held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 6 to 8 September 2015. This document was developed online by the AfIGF Charter Working Group[i] established by the African Union.

b) With the view to solicit and collect inputs and comments that would help improve the contents of this draft charter, the draft has been circulated among the various African Internet Governance stakeholder groups in the second week of September 2017 for a 3-week period, which ended on 30th September 2017. The revised document was finalized by the Charter Working Group on 5 December 2017.

2 Background on the Internet Governance Forum

Building on the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals and considering the mandate given at the Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis (WSIS), the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a United Nations led-activity initiated in 2006 as a global platform for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue on prevailing and emerging issues on Internet Governance to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability, and development of the Internet.

2.1 IGF mandate

As per Paragraphs 72 and 80 of the Tunis Agenda: "We ask the UN Secretary-General, in an open and inclusive process, to convene, by the second quarter of 2006, a meeting of the new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue—called the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). The mandate of the Forum is to:

i. Discuss public policy issues related to key elements of Internet Governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet;

ii. Facilitate discourse between bodies dealing with different cross-cutting international public policies regarding the Internet and discuss issues that do not fall within the scope of any existing body;

iii. Interface with appropriate inter-governmental organizations and other institutions on matters under their purview;

iv. Facilitate the exchange of information and best practices, and in this regard make full use of the expertise of the academic, scientific and technical communities;

v. Advise all stakeholders by proposing ways and means to accelerate the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world;

vi. Strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet governance mechanisms, particularly those from developing countries;

vii. Identify emerging issues, bring them to the attention of the relevant bodies and the general public, and, where appropriate, make recommendations;

viii. Contribute to capacity building for Internet governance in developing countries, drawing on local sources of knowledge and expertise;

ix. Promote and assess, on an ongoing basis, the embodiment of WSIS principles in Internet Governance processes;

x. Discuss, inter alia, issues relating to critical Internet resources;

xi. Help to find solutions to the issues arising from the use and misuse of the Internet, of particular concern to everyday users;

xii. Publish its proceedings.

Paragraph 80:

We encourage the development of multi-stakeholder processes at the national, regional and international levels to discuss and collaborate on the expansion and diffusion of the Internet as a means to support development efforts to achieve internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.

2.2 Extension of the IGF Mandate

a) The mandate of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was put in place initially for a five years duration (2006-2010);

b) Following the first five years successful delivery of the mandate of IGF, the international community decided to extend the IGF mandate for another five years covering the period (2011-2015).

c) Recognizing that the arrangements of the first ten years of the IGF process worked effectively to make the Internet the highly robust, dynamic and geographically diverse medium than it is today, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2015 resolved to extend the IGF mandate for another 10 years with its current mandate as set out in paragraph 72 to 78 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.

2.3 Preliminary Notes

In the context of AfIGF:

a) The term Multi-stakeholderism refers to the meaningful and accountable participation and inclusion of all stakeholders in the processes of the African Internet Governance Forum. It includes the following stakeholder Groups/Affiliations:

i. Government;

ii. Private sector;

iii. Civil society;

Academia;

    v.   African regional organizations;

   vi.   Technical community; and

 vii.   Youth

b) The respective roles and responsibilities of stakeholders should be interpreted in a flexible manner with reference to the issue under discussion.

c) Participation to the AfIGF will be on individual basis while participants may identify with a stakeholder group.

d) The AfIGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group (AfIGF-MAG) members are volunteers who are selected on personal merit. However, in selecting members of AfIGF-MAG, every stakeholder group and the five (5) African Sub-Regions should be represented, as much as possible.

e) The role of the AfIGF-MAG is to assist the African Union Commission in organizing the annual AfIGF meetings and to prepare the relevant content.

f) The linkage between the AfIGF and the sub-regional IGFs is based on strong and continuous relationships between the AfIGF Secretariat and members of the AfIGF-MAG who are at the same time members of their respective sub-regional IGFs.

3 Background on the African Internet Governance Forum

a) The African Internet community contributed significantly to the WSIS process and to the implementation of its outputs, especially with regard to Internet governance, hosting two global IGFs in Egypt (2009) and Kenya (2011).

b) Responding to a strong need to support and promote the consolidation of the on-going activities related to Internet governance, in 2011, the African Internet community took the initiative of establishing the African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF).

c) Presently, there are five sub-regional IGF initiatives that are ongoing in Africa: the West Africa Internet Governance Forum (WAIGF), the East Africa Internet Governance Forum (EAIGF), Forum de Gouvernance de l'Internet en Afrique Centrale (FGI-CA), the Southern Africa Internet Governance Forum (SAIGF) and the North African Internet Governance Forum (NAIGF). In line with the United Nations General Assembly 2O15 decision, the African IGF activities are extended for a ten years period ending in 2026, according to the following principles, objectives, rules and procedures.

3.1 Fundamental principles

The AfIGF shall, in keeping with the global Internet Governance Forum, be:

a) **Open** - all entities, organizations and participating institutions which are Internet governance stakeholders shall be free to join the forum.

b) **Multi-stakeholder** - At all points, efforts shall be made to encourage all categories of stakeholders to actively participate in the Forum.

c) **Language Diversity** - The AfIGF, to the measure of its capacity, shall strive to maintain language diversity based on the working languages of the African Union, in its operations. Given budgetary constraints at least English and French will be used.

d) **Transparent** - The stakeholders shall strive to be open in communications, in decisions and their implementations. Clear understanding of the Internet Governance process for sustainability in engagement of all stakeholders shall be the aim of the AFIGF.

3.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the African Internet Governance Forum are:

a) To raise greater awareness and support user's capabilities in the field of Internet governance to ensure good preparation for African stakeholders to contribute and interact at the global level;

b) To ensure that Africa's interests and voices in Global Internet Governance Forum and at regional and international levels are well formulated, understood and taken into consideration;

c) To develop coordinated regional action plan and facilitate international exchanges on issues pertinent to Internet governance;

d) To boost and facilitate the participation of the African stakeholders in specialized regional and international forums on Internet governance;

e) To promote and encourage the establishment of national IGFs to create and maintain dialogues among all stakeholders on ICT for development issues and facilitate the countries' participation in regional IGF processes as well as global IGF1;

f) To promote access to information and knowledge, content development and the use of African languages in the cyberspace; and

g) To promote the use of ICTs and the Internet for accelerating the socio-economic development of the continent.

3.3 Procedures

a) AfIGF is open to all stakeholder groups who would like to participate in its activities.

b) There are no registration or/and participation fees to AfIGF.

c) The Secretariat is not obliged to fund participation of stakeholders.

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[1] This was a recommendation of the 4th ordinary session of the African Union Conference of Ministers in charge of Communication and Information Technologies (CITMC-4) held in Sudan in September 2012.

4 AfIGF Processes

4.1 The AfIGF Annual Meeting

a) The AfIGF is held annually, preferably in different countries within one of the five African sub-regions, ideally on a rotational basis.

b) The AfIGF meeting is chaired by the host country supported by the Secretariat and the MAG Chairperson.

c) The AfIGF annual meetings are organized in plenary and breakout sessions, depending on topics identified by the MAG through stakeholders consultations.

d) Side events and pre-events may be organized in the context of the annual AfIGF, in accordance with guidelines to be established by the MAG.

e) AfIGF report will be produced at the end of each meeting.

f) A summary shall be produced for each workshop, breakout and plenary session. Workshop organizers are responsible for producing their report while plenary and breakout sessions are the responsibility of the MAG.

g) The host country may organize an exhibition during the annual AfIGF meeting, in accordance with the "Side events and pre-events guidelines".

4.2 The Nominating Committee (NOMCOM)

4.2.1 Composition of the NOMCOM

The AfIGF Nominating Committee is composed of members from the AUC, the sub-regional representatives and one (1) African regional institution.

4.2.2 Roles and functions

The role of the AfIGF Nominating Committee (NOMCOM) is to appoint 10 MAG members, among candidates from all African countries for a period of two years.

4.3 The AfIGF Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group (AfIGF-MAG)

4.3.1 AfIGF-MAG Composition

a) Membership of the AfIGF-MAG shall be drawn from individuals representing relevant African Government Institutions, Civil Society, Academia and Technical community, Private Sector and Youth.

b) The AfIGF-MAG is composed of:

   i. The conveners of the five African sub-regional IGFs;

   ii. Ten (10) members appointed among candidates from (all) African countries, by the Nominating Committee (NOMCOM) for a mandate of two years.

   iii. One (1) member designated by the Africa Union Commission

iv.   One (1) member designated by an African Regional Intergovernmental Organization

c) Regional African organizations and Africa based international organizations may also participate in the activities of AfIGF-MAG.

d) The MAG shall select a Chairperson and a General Rapporteur taking into consideration a reasonable rotation of the responsibilities among the five African sub-regions and stakeholder categories.

e) The AfIGF-MAG members serve on a voluntary and pro-bono basis.

f) AfIGF-MAG members serve in their personal capacity but are expected to have extensive linkages with their respective stakeholder groups.

4.3.2 Roles and functions

a) The main role of the AfIGF-MAG is to prepare the organization of the annual meeting.

b) The decisions of the AfIGF-MAG will be made by consensus.

c) In cooperation with the AfIGF secretariat, the AfIGF-MAG main functions include:

i.   Manage the content of the annual AfIGF by

- determining the theme and sub-themes (after an inclusive consultation with stakeholders); and

- developing the structure and format of the annual meeting of the Forum.

ii.   With the support of the AfIGF Secretariat and in close collaboration with the host country, coordinate the preparation of the annual meeting of the AfIGF.

iii.   In coordination with the Secretariat, the AfIGF MAG may also contribute to marketing of the annual Forum and sourcing of financial and technical partners as collaborators.

iv.   Review proposal for amendment to the Charter.

4.3.3 Duration of the mandate

a) The composition of the AfIGF-MAG is announced at the end of each even year's meeting. The duration of the MAG mandate is meant normally for two years. After the first renewal, five (5) members will be retained for another term while the remaining five (5) will retire -. Subsequently, the longest serving members will retire at the end of each term. The mandate ends following the announcement of the new MAG. Former MAG members are eligible for reappointment after 2 years break.

b) The new AfIGF-MAG would be inaugurated at an annual AfiGF meeting and shall commence seating within 2 months of the announcement/inauguration.

4.3.4 Organization of the MAG activities

a) To facilitate the Annual AfIGF preparation, the AfIGF-MAG and the AfIGF Secretariat will put in place the following four (4) specialized committees:

i.   Program Committee;

ii.   Fellowship & Sponsorship Committee;

iii.   Communication and Outreach Committee; and

iv.   Exhibition Committee.

b) The AfIGF MAG Chairperson and the AfIGF Secretariat may create other committees and working groups led by AfIGF-MAG members and may co-opt volunteers from the community. Committees and working groups would further be established based on needs in accordance with the requirements of the annual AfIGF preparatory process. Such Committees and Working Groups are setup on ad-hoc basis.

4.4 The AfIGF secretariat

4.4.1 Hosting of the AfIGF Secretariat

a) The AfIGF Secretariat shall be composed of a lean set up comprising a Coordinator, Desk Officer and seasonal volunteers including interns and fellows.

b) The AfIGF Secretariat is hosted by the African Union Commission (AUC) and supported by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), in accordance with the Joint AUC and ECA Communiqué on the Secretariat of the African IGF, dated 3 September 2014. It is physically located at the AUC Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

4.4.2 Roles of the AfIGF Secretariat

a) The Secretariat will have the following responsibilities:

i.   Provide administrative, logistics and organisational support to the AfIGF-MAG;

ii.   Promote the AfIGF activities at global, sub-regional and national levels;

iii.   Develop strategies on sustaining the AfIGF process and Secretariat in consultation with the AfIGF-MAG;

iv.   Develop TORs for hosting the AfIGF events, identifying and following up with potential hosts;

v.   announce the Nominating Committee (NOMCOM) members during odd-year sessions;

vi.   announce AfIGF MAG composition during even-year sessions;

vii.   Call for expression of interest to host the following year's meeting by any country at the conclusion of each AfIGF; and

viii.   Develop and maintain active e-mail lists, website and act as a knowledge management hub of AfIGF's experiences, best practices, innovative ideas, expertise, and resources available at sub-regional and national IGFs.

4.5 Funding of AfIGF activities

a) The AUC and UNECA (in accordance with the Joint AUC and ECA Communiqué referred to in paragraph 4.4.1 (b) above shall provide a core budget to fund AfIGF activities. Additional financial and in-kind contributions will be mobilized from development partners showing interests in supporting the success and sustainability of annual AfIGF events.

b) In addition, an AfIGF Support Fund will be created and managed by the Secretariat sourced from:

    i.   Voluntary contributions of African and international organizations;

    ii.   Contributions from individuals and businesses; and

    iii.   Contributions from the AfIGF meetings host countries.

5 Adoption of the Charter

The charter was adopted by the Sixth African IGF on 6 December 2017 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. List of participants is in annex.

6 Amendments to the Charter

a) Participants to the African IGF may:
    i.   submit proposals for amendments to the Secretariat
    ii.   the Secretariat will forward the proposals to AfIGF-MAG for review
    iii.   If found relevant, the AfIGF-MAG submit them to the wider forum for discussion, approval or rejection.

7 Transitional measures

The Working Group will support the Secretariat activities until the AfIGF MAG is established.

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[i]The Working Group is composed of the following individuals: **Chairperson**: Mary Uduma, Nigeria; **African IGF Secretariat**: Makane Faye, Senegal; members: Olusegun H. Olugbile, Nigeria, Ridha Guellouz, Tunisia, Towela Nyirenda-Jere, South Africa (NEPAD Agency), Wisdom Donkor, Ghana.