



## 12<sup>TH</sup> WEST AFRICAN INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

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THEME: "DIGITAL INCLUSION AND ACCESS IN WEST AFRICA IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19"

ONLINE

22 – 24 JULY 2020

### COMMUNIQUE

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[ORIGINAL VERSION: ENGLISH]

We, the participants of the 12<sup>th</sup> West African Internet Governance Forum (WAIGF), meeting online, from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020, representing the Internet governance initiatives of the following fifteen (15) countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo;

With the participation and support of the following partners: ECOWAS Commission, African Union, AFRINIC, ICANN, IGF Secretariat, IGFSa, ISOC, and World Wide Web Foundation.

- Recalling the results of the previous editions of the West African Internet Governance Forum which were held respectively in Accra, Dakar, Lagos, Freetown, Abidjan, Abuja, Niamey, Cotonou, Ouagadougou and Banjul;
- Considering the critical importance of the Internet to the economy of countries and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which has proven the need for greater access to affordable Internet;
- Recognising the need to ensure user and market confidence to sustainably own the benefits of the Internet at the community level;
- Desirous, on one hand, to build an innovative, dynamic, prosperous, and united sub-regional Internet community and, on the other, a stable and secure Internet ecosystem;
- Taking into account the need to build the capacity of youths through the West Africa School on Internet Governance (WASIG) to increase youth participation in public policy issues that Internet Governance focusses on;
- Recognising the need to continue the WASIG to facilitate youth participation in the WAIGF.

## **1) Report that:**

- a) The 13<sup>th</sup> Forum shall hold in Mali/Niger in 2021
- b) The WASIG shall be organised as a pre-event of the WAIGF

## **2) Recommend:**

### **a) On Cybersecurity and cybercrime**

- i. Encourage the establishment of a regional Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) that will collaborate with national CERTs to promote the sharing of information on cyber threats and attacks in the region.
- ii. Urge Member States to promote Research and Development (R&D) on the themes of cybercrime and cyber security which cater to the regional context.
- iii. Call on Member States to take part in the UN Deliberations on Cybersecurity and Cybercrime through liaisons with their respective country delegations at the UN.
- iv. Encourage the full involvement of Member States and stakeholders in the implementation of the ECOWAS cybersecurity agenda.
- v. Call on the ECOWAS region to partake fully in the implementation of the UN Secretary General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, building on the successes of WAIGF's participation in IGF over the years.
- vi. Establish Centres of Excellence that can be used to raise awareness and build cyber capacity in cyber and emerging technologies.
- vii. Develop curricula in cyber and emerging technologies that can be used to capacity.

### **b) On Digital Rights**

- i. Call on more stakeholder engagement and partnerships with governments to avoid internet disruptions and shutdowns that lead to socio-economic losses.
- ii. Encourage Member States to continue civic education to build the capacity of citizens in understanding their rights and use of the Internet in a responsible way, particularly social media.
- iii. Urge Member States to consider constitutional changes to include Internet access (meaningful access) as a fundamental human right.
- iv. Call on Member States to adopt a careful balance between human rights, privacy and freedom of expression.
- v. Encourage Member States to implement necessary, transparent and lawful measures in digital surveillance taken to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

**c) On Privacy and Trust**

- i. Urge Member States to implement data regulatory frameworks that foster trust.
- ii. Call on Member States to put in place reliable channels such as official websites, social media pages that citizens can access to get accurate information.
- iii. Urge Member States to implement the ECOWAS regional texts and ratify the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention).

**d) On Emerging Technology**

- i. ECOWAS Member States to develop a national strategy on emerging technologies using multistakeholder processes which will allow for assessment of the viability and added value for emerging technology within local contexts.
- ii. Call on Member States to encourage the production of local content and local datasets for the designing and training of emerging technologies.
- iii. Urge Member States to collaborate with the private sector, civil society and technical organisations to encourage innovation and an enabling environment for start-ups.

**e) On Access and infrastructure**

- i. Urge Member States to intensify their efforts in addressing the issues surrounding access, connectivity and affordability in the region.
- ii. Urge Member States to address infrastructure gaps in our countries.

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