

**STATEMENT BY GHANA ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP ON INTERNET  
GOVERNANCE PRESENTED AT THE PREPCOM ON WSIS IN GENEVA ON 23RD  
FEBRUARY 2005**

Your Excellency the Chairman of PrepCom,

Distinguished Delegates,

During the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), Internet Governance was identified as one of the critical issues to be agreed upon to promote global development. It is in the light of this that the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) was set up to delve further into the subject.

I wish on behalf of the Africa Group to thank the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) for submitting its preliminary report to PrepCom2 for consideration.

In the report, it is noted in particular that the WGIG has adopted an 'open and inclusive' method in the process of going about its mandate set out clearly in the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Action Plan to *'design a process that ensures a mechanism for the full and active participation of governments, the private sector and the civil society from both developing and developed countries, involving relevant intergovernmental and international organizations and forums'*.

Mr. Chairman,

The policy issues involved in this management transformation process which have to be agreed upon by all have been rightly identified by the WGIG in its preliminary report as relating to; the equitable distribution of the resources; to make the internet accessible to all in a secure and stable manner; and also to take into consideration the need for multilingualism and content usage to facilitate the use by all of the Internet in an unrestricted manner.

To us in Africa we consider the Internet as a major tool for development. Having regard therefore to the importance attached to the contribution expected from all stakeholders in evolving a governance system, the Africa Regional Preparatory Conference held in Accra and facilitated by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> February 2005 had series of workshops which brought together representatives from governments, private sector, civil society organizations, academia, IT Engineers, ICT Experts, Regional and International Organisations to exchange views and visions on the developmental policy, technical, ethical, societal, security and legal dimensions etc. related to the global Internet Governance.

At the end of the discussions, which examined Africa's participation in the global Internet Governance, the following specific proposals contained in a resolution were concluded which are being presented to PrepCom2 to serve as input for the work of the WGIG.

**Resolution on Internet Governance**

We, representatives of governments, the private sector and civil society of the African States, meeting at the African Regional Preparatory Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Accra from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> February 2005 within the framework of the African Information Society Initiative (AISII),

**Considering:**

The Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action,

The setting up of the UN Working Group on Internet Governance by the Secretary General as requested by the Geneva Summit,

The importance of building an Information Society which serves development purposes in Africa,

The progress made on the African continent towards the building of an Information Society with the active support of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and its partners,

The deployment of NICI Plans in most of the African countries, which integrate, to some extent some dimensions of Internet Governance,

The existence of African organisations dealing with the management of Internet resources,

The necessity for Africa to provide itself sound and sustainable organizations in managing Internet resources,

The importance of multilingualism on Internet to assure an informed participation of populations in the Information Society,

The importance of developing access for all, the maintenance of law, the security and the stability of network infrastructure,

**We reaffirm** our common and continuous will to support the building of An African Information Society dedicated to the achievement of the goals of the Millennium Declaration and the NEPAD ICT initiatives,

We therefore

**Call** on all governments, the civil society, the private sector as well as the technical community to pay attention to the Internet as a tool for development and to take part in all the forums relating to Internet Governance so that the concerns of the continent are taken into account in this sector, which is rapidly evolving. In this regard special attention should be given to the composition and the role of the present Internet Governing bodies with a view to ensuring their legitimacy as fully representative authorities for the entire community worldwide.

We assert that Africa should participate actively in international organizations dealing with Internet Governance. In this regard special attention should be given by international bodies dealing with the Internet to the needs and interests of the developing and least developed countries.

We welcome the participation of regional organizations that have been representing Africa region in Internet matters at the global levels—AfriNic, AfriSPA, AfNOG, AfTLD should be supported and their activities/operations should be harmonized and in a co-ordinated manner to bring maximum benefits to the Africa region in particular and the world as a whole.

In order to achieve an inclusive and participatory approach, policy makers should bring on board the remaining 90% of the population unaware of the stakes and challenges of the Information Society, especially those handicapped due to language barriers. In this regard, there is the need to support initiatives to develop local content in local languages and their access on the Internet. In this regard, we invite regional organizations and African experts to work for the integration of African languages and multilingualism on Internet.

We call for the mainstreaming of various dimensions of Internet Governance into the development of national and regional e-strategic plans.

The participatory management of the Internet should include all the actors of development (government, local communities, civil Society, private sector and intergovernmental organisations.)

Appropriate legislative framework should be established to deal with public policy issues related to the Internet Infrastructure and applications (e-commerce, spam, cyber-security, privacy etc.). This should also encourage the implementation of national, sub-regional and regional Internet exchange points and promote support for relevant technical regional institutions eg. AfriNic.

We call for the need to set up or support existing experts and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) working groups to tackle the access issues, from bandwidth to pricing and the last mile coverage in sub regions and countries in consultation with relevant associations operating from the sub-region.

In this respect, it is imperative to support the regional organizations to set up sub-regional and regional Internet exchange points. In addition experts and REC's working groups should strive to work on harmonization of e-commerce, e-government and e-strategies in their respective sub-regions and countries.

Efforts should be made so that ccTLDs are managed by respective countries.

To enable policy makers comprehend the stakes and challenges of Internet Governance to guide in policy formulation of countries there is the need for capacity building and awareness raising programmes for policy makers. In this regard, there is need to support the role of the Media in awareness raising for the entire population.

There is also the need for training of professionals in order to build strong capacity base for both technical and business aspects of Internet Governance.

To work on removing the gender barriers (languages, educational, cultural, interfaces, affordability, etc.) to ICT education and training and promoting equal training opportunities in ICT-related fields to vulnerable populations.

**In conclusion** the Internet is a developmental tool and there is the need to consolidate the various entities taking care of this global facility to ensure that it becomes a development tool serving developmental purposes equitably.

**Accra, February 4, 2005 and resubmitted in Geneva February 24, 2005.**