

## **ADF IV Consensus statement and the way forward (Contribution from ICT-FG)**

### **Part I: Preamble**

1. Noting that the growing impoverishment of our countries, and considering the digital divide between Africa and the rest of the world;
2. Recalling the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) recommendation for the implementation of National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) plans in each country;
3. Recalling that the AISI stipulation that Government should promote the deployment and the use of ICTs within their administrative structure as well as in the economy and the society at the whole;
4. Considering that e-governance, which incorporate the principles of e-government aim at enhancing good governance and strengthening the democratic process, can also be seen as a way of providing access to information, freedom of expression, greater equity, efficiency, productivity growth and social inclusion;
5. Considering that successful e-government initiatives have demonstrable and tangible impact on improving citizen participation and quality of life as a result of effective multi-stakeholder partnerships;
6. Considering that the Africa Union Commission as coordination body can ensure more coherence and synergy among the diverse initiatives, including the NEPAD e-government initiative, in Africa and strengthen the process of e-government;
7. Recalling that the WSIS Declaration and Action Plan recommended the need for Governments to implement e-government systems to facilitate their administrative activities and services delivery to their citizens;
8. Recognizing that e-government can act as a strong catalyst for paradigm shift in the way government functions in the long run only when there is political will, institutional support, and commitment from all the stakeholders;
9. Recognizing the need and importance of promoting the use of African languages in the delivery of Governments services including those related to e-government systems and applications;
10. Acknowledging that opportunities for research and development (R&D) and the use of Free and Open source software (FOSS) in e-government are enormous due to the diverse nature of applications used by citizens and government departments, which often face resource constraints;

### **Part II: Leadership and Commitment from African Governments**

11. African Governments need to develop appropriate policy framework supported by the necessary strategy and legislation for e-government that:
  - Has linkage with strategic development objectives
  - Builds political support by enlisting a high-ranking political e-government champions;

- Involves citizens in the strategic choice of policies and technologies and respects their needs and priorities by actively engaging civil society in the process;
  - Focuses its awareness, outreach, and training efforts onto less privileged segment of the targeted users specially attending to gender balance and neglected rural areas;
  - Promotes local content and supports local language development;
  - Makes information widely available to citizen through the use of open standards and protocols that take into account African language systems and interfaces;
12. In line with the recommendations of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Committee on Development Information (CODI), African Governments need to adopt legislative and regulatory measures on FOSS use in African public administrations in order to reduce the dependency on proprietary software whose too restrictive and very costly user licenses puts a strain on the public finances of our countries;
  13. African Governments should support research and development (R&D) institutions and bodies in their effort to develop appropriate e-government systems and applications for Africa;
  14. African Governments should set up an enabling environment for the development and implementation of e-government systems, including undertaking institutional and organizational system reforms, promoting change of attitude to work, enacting e-government enabler laws and legislation, promoting the development of requisite human resources and ICT infrastructure and putting in place mechanisms to mobilize financial and other technological resources.

### **Part III: Role of other Stakeholders**

15. Regional Economic Communities (RECs) should promote the implementation of e-government systems within their member States by putting in place mechanisms for the promotion of standards and good practices and the harmonization of policy and regulatory environment. They should also provide avenues for mobilization of financial resources to assist implementation of e-government programmes in their respective member countries;
16. International agencies and donors partners should provide increased capacity to support e-government initiatives at local, national, and regional levels in Africa;
17. Africa' Parliaments and parliamentarians have a central role to play in mobilizing and representing the people. National parliaments have the responsibility of passing the necessary legislation to promote legislative and regulatory environment conducive to e-government success.
18. Women need to be involved in operationalizing all aspects of e-governance in order to consider organizational culture, structures and processes that may conflict with women's empowerment goals;
19. Given that half the population in Africa is youth, the active participation of young people in e-governance decision-making processes in Africa and institutions of the African Union is important and must enjoy political will;
20. Given that private sector involvement will be crucial to facilitate the implementation of e-government in Africa countries, African countries should seek to promote and implement private-sector friendly investment policies in the delivery of public services;

21. Given the key role that civil society can play in promoting equity, transparency and democratic participation, they have a major role to play in devising innovative ways that will ensure the active participation of citizens in promoting the objectives of e-governance;
22. Given the importance of traditional society in governance systems, Africa countries should promote participations of the citizens through adequate ICT policy and strategies.