

## **West African IGF**

**14 October 2009**

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Mr. Chairman, Honorable Minister of Communications, CEO of AfriNIC, ....dignitaries, colleagues from IGF, ICANN,ISOC, AfTLD, AfREN and invited guests,

I thank the Government of Ghana, AfriNIC, the sponsors and the organizers of the meeting for bringing us together with the theme “promoting the Multi-stakeholder Model for Internet development in Africa.”

I met several of you at international forums and am pleased to welcome you all to Ghana for the West African Internet Governance Forum, with an objection to prepare for the next IGF.

That meeting is very special in that it is hosted by an African country at Sharm El Sheik in Egypt and thus Africa has a unique opportunity to get its position on issues on the governance of the Internet appreciated by the global community. We should make an effort to understand the issues and explore their implications to our sub-regional community. It’s a challenge because the subject is broad and sometimes quite technical

With AfriNIC as lead organizer of this event, this is also a home coming for AfriNIC to Ghana where the foundation for AfriNIC was hatched. It is also the home of the African Network Operators Group (AfNOG) who share the same operator community with AfriNIC but focuses on the development of the community’s technical capacity and cooperation.

The Government of Ghana by hosting this meeting is showing its commitment to a renaissance of the Internet in Ghana. This is welcomed by the local Internet community.

The African Internet technical community had its first IG meeting in Cotonou, Benin in 1998 and addressed how to participate in the emerging processes for administration and coordination of the technical resources of the Internet i.e. during the birth of ICANN. That crucial event made it possible for Africa to be part of the technical policy processes and gave birth to the Af\*, the African core groups. We mentioned African Network Information Center (AfriNIC), AfNOG, African ccTLDs (AfTLD), African Research and Educational Networks (AfREN) and others.

Now, we are working on establishing the .africa name space for use by the African community and it will be community oriented. Additional information is located at [www.dotafrica.org](http://www.dotafrica.org)

It is my hope that this meeting and the meeting at Sharm El Sheikh will have equally positive value in Internet governance issues beyond critical Internet resources.

It should be emphasized also that sometimes the process itself is a significant outcome.

Thus, at this West African Internet Governance meeting, please appreciate that having the academic, civil society, government, private sector and technical communities together, I mean together and in our diversity gives us the resilience required if we are to have a common goal, governance of a single open standards based Internet.

The multi-stakeholder approach practiced in IGF and in particular ICANN received endorsement in its evolution by the conclusion of the Joint Project Agreement (JPA) and affirmation of the Commitments with the US Department of Commerce.

The bottom up approach in a multi-stakeholder environment practiced by the global technical community through IETF, ISOC and ICANN is not an accident. It's from the nature of the Internet where several policy domains are cooperating and coordinating their activities to create the single Internet we wish to govern.

Hence as the Internet becomes a convergent architecture our governance processes would necessarily evolve to become more multi-stakeholder and bottom up. It gives opportunity to engage varied expertise to contribute and this creates a more robust governance environment for development.

I wish you a good meeting and look forward to reading about the outcomes.

Thank you