

ROAD TO GHANA: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SERIES #1

Leveraging the NRI Ecosystem for the Implementation of the WSIS+20 Outcomes and the Global Digital Compact in Africa

Organised by the Africa IGF Secretariat
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Background

The Africa Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF) is launching the "Road to Ghana" Community Engagement Series as part of preparations for the 15th Africa Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF 2026), which will be hosted by the Government of Ghana in Accra from 2–5 November 2026 under the theme: **"Advancing Africa's Digital Future Through Innovation, Inclusion, and Trust."**

The first session of the series will focus on the role of National, Regional, and Youth Internet Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs) in advancing the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)+20 Outcomes and the Global Digital Compact (GDC) across Africa.

The adoption of the WSIS+20 Outcome Document provides renewed political momentum for advancing an inclusive, people-centred, and development-oriented information society. The Outcome Document reaffirms the importance of multistakeholder cooperation, inclusive participation, and strengthened digital cooperation at the global, regional, and national levels.

It also reaffirms the role of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), originally established under paragraphs 72–80 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (2005), as a key platform for multistakeholder dialogue on public policy issues related to the Internet and digital technologies.

Building on the IGF mandate and its subsequent renewal through the United Nations General Assembly WSIS+10 Review Outcome Document (A/RES/70/125), as well as its reaffirmation in the WSIS+20 Outcome Document (A/RES/80/173), National, Regional, and Youth Internet Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs) have emerged as important mechanisms for extending multistakeholder dialogue and cooperation to regional, national, and local levels.

While independently organized and community-driven, NRIs play a critical role in fostering inclusive participation, promoting digital cooperation, identifying emerging policy challenges, and supporting the localization of the WSIS Action Lines and the Global Digital Compact.

Africa hosts one of the world's most vibrant NRI ecosystems, comprising national IGFs, Youth IGFs, parliamentary IGFs, subregional IGFs, and other community-driven initiatives. As implementation of the WSIS+20 Outcomes shifts from global commitments to regional and

national action, there is an opportunity to further strengthen the African NRI architecture as a platform for stakeholder engagement, capacity-building, policy dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and monitoring progress towards common digital development goals.

This community engagement session seeks to explore how the African NRI ecosystem can contribute to translating the WSIS+20 Outcomes and the Global Digital Compact into concrete actions, partnerships, and policy processes across the continent, while identifying the capacities, resources, and collaborative mechanisms required to enhance the effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of NRIs in Africa.

Objectives

The session aims to:

1. Present key outcomes and recommendations emerging from the WSIS+20 review process.
2. Examine the role of NRIs in supporting implementation of the WSIS Action Lines and the Global Digital Compact.
3. Identify opportunities for stronger collaboration between NRIs, governments, regional organizations, and development partners.
4. Explore mechanisms for monitoring, reporting, and sharing good practices on WSIS+20 implementation through the NRI ecosystem.
5. Input from the African NRI community into the WSIS Action Line Roadmaps being developed by Action Line Facilitators.
6. Gather community inputs to inform Africa's contribution to global Internet governance and digital cooperation processes.
7. Identify priorities for strengthening the sustainability, effectiveness, and impact of African NRIs.

Expected Output

This Community Engagement Series serves as a foundational building block for the development of Africa's Recommendations on Strengthening the NRI Ecosystem for the Implementation of the WSIS+20 Outcomes and the Global Digital Compact.

Inputs gathered through this and subsequent community engagement sessions will contribute to a consultative process involving National, Regional, Youth, Parliamentary, and Subregional IGF Initiatives, as well as governments, civil society, the technical community, academia, the private sector, and international organizations.

The process is expected to produce:

- A consolidated set of African community recommendations on strengthening the National and Regional Internet Governance Initiative (NRI) ecosystem, including inputs to regional WSIS+20 implementation planning and follow-up processes;

- Identification of key challenges, opportunities, and capacity needs facing African NRIs;
- Proposed institutional, coordination, and sustainability mechanisms to enhance the effectiveness of NRIs;
- Recommendations on the role of NRIs in supporting the implementation, monitoring, and follow-up of the WSIS+20 Outcomes and the Global Digital Compact;
- Inputs to the Africa IGF 2026 programme and other intersessional activities.

The final recommendations will be presented and validated during the 15th Africa Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF 2026) in Accra, Ghana, and subsequently shared with the global Internet governance community, including the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), relevant United Nations processes, and other stakeholders engaged in the implementation of the WSIS+20 Outcomes and the Global Digital Compact.

Moderator

- Sorene Assefa, Africa IGF Secretariat

PROPOSED SESSION FORMAT

Time	Session	Lead / Speakers
Part I – Opening Plenary (45 Minutes)		
1 min	Moderator	Sorene, Coordinator, Africa IGF Secretariate
35 min	Scene Setting: WSIS+20, GDC and the Future of NRIs (5 minutes each)	Mactar Seck, UNECA — Confirmed Mihret Woodmatas, AUC — TBC Hon. Alhagie Mbow, Chair, Africa IGF MAG — Confirmed Isabelle Lois, Vice-Chair, CSTD — Confirmed Deniz Susar, UN DESA — Confirmed Vladimir Stankovic, ITU — Confirmed Anja Gengo, IGF Secretariat — Confirmed
6 min	WSIS+20 Outcome Reflections	Davide Storti, UNESCO — Confirmed.
3 min	The 2026 WSIS Forum session "From Dialogue to Practice: NRI-Driven Multistakeholder Labs"	Eng. Concettina Cassa, <i>Head of International Affairs</i> , the Agency for Digital Italy (AgID) — Confirmed. Session outcome on the "NRI Labs" Framework: Agreement to establish collaborative, voluntary "NRI Labs". Designed to allow national and regional stakeholders to share grass-roots experiences and feed them systematically into the global Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and WSIS Forum.
3 min	Moderator's Synthesis and Introduction to Breakout Discussions	Sorene Assefa, Coordinator, Africa IGF Secretariat
Part II – Breakout Discussions (45 Minutes)		

Participants are divided into four thematic groups. Each group appoints a facilitator and rapporteur. Participants are encouraged to provide concise responses using keywords and short recommendations.

42 min	Group 1: Sustainability and Capacity Development	Focus Question: How can NRIs become sustainable and resilient? Keyword Prompts: Biggest challenges; Capacity gaps; Funding models; Secretariat support; Skills required; Partnerships needed Facilitator: Mary Uduma Rapporteur: Fatou SARR
	Group 2: WSIS+20 and GDC Implementation	Focus Question: How can NRIs support implementation and follow-up of the WSIS+20 Outcomes and the Global Digital Compact? Facilitator: Lillian Nalwoga Rapporteur: Winnie Kamau
	Group 3: Inclusion and Multistakeholder Participation	Focus Question: How can NRIs become more inclusive, representative, and impactful (i.e., operationalising NETmundial principles)? Facilitator: Dr Jimson Olufuye, Mohamed Farahat Rapporteur: Yao Amevi A. Sossou, Policy Chair, NPOC, ICANN
	Group 4: Future Architecture of the African NRI Ecosystem	Focus Question: What institutional architecture is needed to make African NRIs fit for purpose by 2035? Facilitator: Anriette Esterhuysen Rapporteur: Michel TCHONANG LINZE
Part III – Reporting Back and Open Discussion (20 Minutes) - Plenary		
20 min	Group Reports (5 Mins Each)	Each Rapporteur presents: Top 3 Challenges; Top 3 Opportunities; Top 3 Recommendations
Part IV – Interactive Poll and Next Steps (10 Minutes)		
7 min	Word Cloud Exercise & Closing	Question: "In one word, what is the most important ingredient for making NRIs fit for purpose in implementing the WSIS+20 Outcomes and the Global Digital Compact?" Participants submit responses using Menti meter. Facilitator: Mactar Seck, Sorene Assefa, Anriette