UGANDA INTERNET GOVERNANCE REPORT 2020

THEME: Redefining the Internet Ecosystem and Policies for inclusive Information Access during Pandemics.

SPONSORS:

Introduction

On Thursday, 12th November, 2020, the Internet Society Uganda Chapter in collaboration with the Ministry of Information Communication Technology and National Guidance organized the Uganda Internet Governance Forum which gathered over 100 participants onsite and virtually.

The meeting exposed the participants to a broader discussion on Redefining the Internet Eco System and Policies for inclusive Information Access during Pandemics.

Ms. Lillian Nalwoga from the Internet Society Uganda Chapter gave a brief introduction about Internet Governance Forum in Uganda and its fundamental objectives. She said that the forum has been held since 2006.

Mr. Jesse Nathan Kalange the representative of the UYIGF 2020 presented the Uganda Youth Internet Governance Report 2020 to the participants. In his submission, he presented the following resolutions that were adopted by the youth during the Forum earlier this year in October as follows:

1. The Youth called upon all stakeholders to work towards the reduction of Internet costs for enhanced accessibility and growth of online business in Uganda.
2. They requested the Internet society to engage universities and other institutions of learning in building a portfolio of cyber awareness nationally and hold regional IGF's.
3. The young people recommended that the government establishes an agency that can take responsibility of Internet issues in the country to see progress in Internet Policy and Governance.
4. They suggested the adaptation of a sensitive gender mainstreaming approach to tackle the issue of women and girl's online safety.
5. They pointed out the need for inclusion of young people and PWDs at all levels of engagement and Internet policy processes.
6. The young people also requested to be availed with platforms to continue the discussion because the Youth IGF is once a year.

Panel one: Tracking Uganda's steps for a transformative digital economy post covid-19.

Key issues discussed included:

Ms. Peace Kuteesa, Co-founder – Zimba Women emphasized that the best skills to take during the digital transformation include Critical thinking, resilience and decision making. This will enable quicker approaches for an inclusive digital revolution that ensure a focused harnessing of opportunities in the digital revolution to improve the national economy especially when internet policies centered around costs and inclusion are leveraged. She also stated that the government should scale down on providing free internet in public places that are accessible by the population because this also contributes to lowering the costs of devices on the market and promoting innovation. She called for engaging women in policy making processes and teaching ICT to children with a focus on the Do's and Don'ts of the Internet. She noted that as young people advocate for digital solutions, we need to think about user trust and safety because government is open to partnering with innovation hubs to foster digital trust in Uganda. lastly, she argued that freedom of expression should not threaten the rights of online users because the computer misuse act 2011 is a tool to combat offensive communications by online abusers.

Mr. Silas Ngabirano, Assistant Commissioner Information Management Services – Ministry of ICT & National Guidance said that The Ministry of ICT has further alluded that the National Broadband Policy implemented by the ministry in respective areas within the country is focused on reducing internet affordability and Government is committed to tailoring innovation hubs to support local communities on internet accessibility by providing room for innovations and open markets to local innovators. He also stated that The Ministry of ICT & National Guidance has established National Innovation Hubs at Nakawa

(Uganda Institute of Information and Communications Technology), at Muni University in West Nile and at Soroti University to best equip young innovators and provide a work force at workplaces with improved technologies through investing in digitizing the National and improving the capacity of the global population.

Ms. Dorothy Mukasa, Executive Director- Unwanted Witness says collaborations in the internet space needs to have extreme and relevant role from implementing partners. It's interesting to note that internet costs remained a key issue that should be addressed by government and relevant stakeholders because the Digital divide is wide in Uganda therefore Internet Service Providers and policy makers should work closely in mitigating affordability on Internet.

Second Panel: Digital Trust and safety in times of pandemic
Key issued discussed include: -

What principles & strategy by design and pricing can be implemented to secure human rights and safety of online users?

Mr. Waiswa Abudu Salam, Head of Legal Affairs – Uganda Communications Commission shared that government has mechanisms to legally prosecute cyber criminals. He notes that Digital trust entails that a person using the internet be assured of the network platform is liable and safe for online safety of the users because identity is key. Providers of different online platforms must be regulated and the consumers be empowered. Further, user personal information such as passwords and usernames must be kept private by the providers. He also shared that the right to be forgotten must be acknowledged by the different platform providers e.g. Asking google to delete a past memory permanently especially when you don't need it anymore. Thus, the primary duty of online users, is the right to safety and the right of privacy of other users i.e. before posting something, one should ask him/herself if they can defend their actions.

What Strategies have been taken by MTN Uganda to improve the quality & accessibility of the internet and information?

In responding to the question, Mr. Mutana Stephen, General Manager Mobile Financial Services – MTN Uganda shared that MTN Uganda as a company, MTN Uganda has rolled out a massive support of the Internet with extra spectrum to improve the 3G & 4G network as a fundamental goal. As part of its contribution to the fight against covid19, MTN launched the Y'ello Hope COVID-19 response initiative which included among others; - working with other partners to reduce the cost of the internet especially during the pandemic; introduction of the MTN work from home bundles; providing zero rated charges for education websites. He shared that Customer Value Management was offered which enabled free voice and data bundles to be given to most of the active users on the network.

What factors should be put into consideration to improve affordability of internet access to women & girls?
Mr. Waiswa noted that ensuring women inclusion and involvement at all levels of decision making must be enhanced. Women experience more online harassments and abuse compared to men. Through internet accessibility in Uganda, the communications sector is so dynamic, ensure the applications you use are licensed and can be downloaded on play store, that way, your security is protected. Privacy and online safety need to be a key and fundamental initiative with parental engagement to sensitize their children on best practices on ensuring online safety.

He also informed the participants that Article 29 and Article 43 of the constitution of Uganda i.e. Right to freedom of expression is not an obsolete right in Uganda and therefore gives the government a higher priory

to manage information flow and control the use of the internet. He also stated that online users should always seek consent from others to repurpose the use of digital content as provided in the Uganda Data Protection and Privacy and Article 27 of constitution of Uganda. Whatever data that is collected by service providers should be for a purpose and should be accurate and updated often. He further explained that offensive communication i.e. if my communication offends another person-rights to privacy/safety, it may be referred to as cyber stalking/cyber bullying which is against the law. He further called for public awareness campaigns on digital literacy and digital rights aimed at building an ethical society to avoid scenarios of breaking laws that are applicable to such acts of criminality. On whether government has power to disconnect internet, he noted that government may have the power to disconnect the Internet when need arises, for example during certain occasions for security reasons.

He also highlighted some challenges faced in the country during the pandemic. These included - Mobile Money theft from Stanbic Bank, MTN Uganda, Airtel Uganda, poor quality of the Internet, spread of false information. In order to solve some of these challenges, NITA Uganda increased the number of public hot spots of My.Ug Internet especially in Kampala while and UCC ensured that more information was made digital to increase access of information.

Ms. Dorothy Mukasa, Executive Director- Unwanted Witness cautioned that different stakeholders should think critically to equip the workforce in the ICT sector and enable affordability of Internet access per month while working with telecom companies to provide incentives. She also stated that training for law enforcement officers on the implementation of the Data Protection and Privacy law must be highly considered especially by the government. This will ensure that the privacy score card which addresses how people and companies who collect personal data must comply with the existing data protection laws is adhered too. On child online safety, she emphasized that parents should set parental controls and ensure that their children don't get exposed to sexual related content online especially during this pandemic that has let many children stay home and now have access to many devices. She clarified that the Anti-pornography law is in existence for perpetrators of the internet and online space and therefore encouraged parents and the public to take measures in curbing pornography especially in the online space.

Ms. Amuge Peace, Coordinator – WOUGNET encouraged creation of public awareness campaigns on digital literacy and information rights aimed at building one ethical society where that victims of cybercrime can report to UCC and the perpetrators can be asked to pull down the content or post made and strongly advice seek for justice for such related abuses of the internet.

CONCLUSION

Policies and innovations at government levels have been a key focus in this year's forum pushing for privacy observation and capacity building, we therefore take this opportunity to thank the respective stakeholders who participated in realizing the success of this activity.

We also call upon other stakeholders especially the government and private sector to come on board to mitigate the gap in the internet ecosystem and we hope to help build more bigger and stronger networks for the technology community in Uganda and globally. We remain committed to serve and secure a better internet for the future.

Prepared by:
Jesse Nathan Kalange
UYIGF Representative

PROGRAMME FOR THE UIGF 2020

No.	Time	Session	Responsible Person
1.	8:00am – 8:30am	Arrival and Registration of Participants	ISOC Uganda
2.	8:30am – 9:00am	Welcome Remarks	Ms. Joan Katambi, Secretary General ISOC Uganda.
3.	9:00am – 9:30am	Review of Past UIGF's	Ms. Lilian Nalwoga, Coordinator Uganda Internet Governance Forum
4.	9:30am – 10:00am	Presentation of the UYIGF	Mr. Jesse Nathan Kalange – Uganda Youth Internet Governance Forum Representative
5.	10:00am – 10:30am	Keynote Address	MoICT Rep (TBC)
6.	10:30am – 11:00am	High Level Panel: Tracking Uganda's steps for a transformative digital economy post covid-19	Mr. Silas Ngabirano, Assistant Commissioner Information Management Services – Ministry of ICT & National Guidance.
			Mr. Mutana Stephen, General Manager Mobile Financial Services – MTN Uganda.
			Ms. Peace Kuteesa, Co-founder – Zimba Women.
			Mr. Benard Wanyama, Syntech Associated Limited.
7.	11:00am – 11:30am	Health Break	ISOC Uganda
8.	11:30am – 1:00pm	Digital Trust and Safety in times of Pandemics	Ms. Dorothy Mukasa, Executive Director- Unwanted Witness
			Ms. Amuge Peace, Coordinator – WOUGNET
			Mr. Waiswa Abudu Salam, Head of Legal Affairs – Uganda Communications Commission
9.	1:00pm – 2:00pm	Closing Remarks and Departure	ISOC Uganda

PICTORIALS DURING THE UGANDA INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM AT HOTEL AFRICANA; KAMPALA-UGANDA (NOVEMBER 2020)









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