

Ghana IGF 2022-1: opening : digital sustainability: data innovations for post coved recovery (planning 7 minutes)

20 May 09:00-09:45

Ladies and gentlemen,
It is a pleasure for me to join West Africa IGF 2022 and to say a few words. I thank organizers for the opportunity. Unfortunately, am unable to join f2f as in the midst of travel overseas

In any case my message is same though abridged.

It's pleasing to see IGF and NRIs growing. I had something to do with their establishment. It's time after a decade we need to pause to ponder how well NRIs are

performing and how well the multi stakeholder approach is being practiced. The theme on digital sustainability and innovation is appropriate as sustainable digital evolution, requires we have legitimate organizations, good governance and diversity in participation. The concern of Africa's inclusion in global Internet buildout would be incomplete, if we at the edge, in Africa, are not organized bottom up.

We wanted to democratize technical know how. We had feared that lack of internet technical know how can result in capture of Africa's future. IGF had been concerned about affordable access and NRIs should now be concerned about intensity of community engagement

We should practice multi stakeholder approach” for community decisions in our organizations and evangelize the practice

The gains we have made in numerous applications on the Internet would not grow unless communities are developed behind them. We need dedication to address these two issues

What makes the Internet work so well is the open participation by engineers, businesses, civil-society organizations, and governments in how it is governed.

The bottom up decision making processes are practiced in the technical internet community and used in IG policy deliberations and as IG organizations we would be expected to follow similar approach

Even though MS is mentioned a lot, one continue to feel it's not yet well understood or practiced well in our region

This MS approach has been successful in holding the internet together and we advocate more widespread application in community decision processes

In our self criticism, we ask how are members of MAG for our institutions formed? What composition? What term? How does community chose its representatives? How open is process? Who are stakeholders? What level of participation? What inter-sessional community work? We have answers for UN IGF MAG but how come it's not obvious how this is done for AFIGF, WAIGF and GHIGF?

The representation needs to be inclusive and demonstrate how we value our differences, to earn legitimacy

The bottom up decision process is not same as an adviser or consultant with a policy or a decision in hand and asking for feedback or comments from interested parties. That would top down.

The MS is about a community addressing issues together and making rules, standards, decisions or policies in a bottom up way especially as we decentralize

Quite often in practice, we do not have all skills in one institution or discipline to address complex issues. Therefore multi stakeholder bottom up process enables access to needed skills and expertise across the community for decisions

The process shall be open and documents published

We cannot over emphasize roles and responsibilities in multi stakeholder process. Typically, one looks to find a rich community including participation by engineers, businesses, civil-society organizations, and governments. Each has a different role with clear and focused responsibilities and each actor needs to remain in their roles for quality results. What is our stake? We also need a good balance of multi stakeholder diversity. In IG or technology governance in general, the participation of technologists/engineers would be critical for sane policies in much same as if approach is practiced in health sector role of medical professionals would be critical

The benefits are numerous but includes:

- leaves a document history
- Accepting wider and diverse views
- Engaging the community in consensus
- Knowledge of community
- Outcome has wider support

The process takes time, can be noisy as issues are passionately debated in public.

Africans, are very top down by default and often authoritative. We also don't share as much information as we should and tend to see things from personal interests and less from the community interests. We may follow previous presentations to get more details.

The level of participation is the biggest challenge of the multi stakeholder decision process. If participation is weak the quality

of output becomes suspect and process degenerate to top down approach to decision making. With weak participation the process can thus be easily captured

Let's adopt multi stakeholder bottom up decision process in other domains beyond Internet governance .

It makes sense to talk to people we don't normally talk to, to expand knowledge and grow community

The question is which draft documents are going to be discussed at this meeting? How do we assess work progress?

I wish you a good meeting and thank you very much for your attention