

REPORT ON THE UGANDA INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

Meeting held

On the 29th October 2008

At the

Grand Imperial Hotel, Kampala

Prepared by the
EAICT4D Uganda Network

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Acronyms:

ccTLD	country-code Top Level Domain.
CFI	Computer Frontiers International.
CIPESA	Collaboration on International ICT policy in East and Southern Africa.
EAICT4D Network	East African Information and Communication Technologies for Development Network.
ICANN	Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers.
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies.
ICT4D	Information and Communication Technologies for Development.
IG	Internet Governance
IGF	Internet Governance Forum
IPv4	Internet Protocol Version 4.
IPv6	Internet Protocol Version 6.
ISP	Internet Service Provider.
ISPA	Internet Service Providers' Association.
ITU	International Telecommunications Union.
WOUGNET	Women of Uganda Network.
WSIS	World Summit of the Information Society.

Introduction:

In preparation of the 3rd Internet Governance Forum to be held in India, December 2008, the East African ICT4D Networks are holding a series of Internet Governance Forums as part of raising awareness of Internet Governance (IG) issues in the region. In Uganda, the National Internet Governance Forum was organized by the three partner organizations i.e. Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), I-Network Uganda, the Collaboration on International ICT policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) and the Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet).

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the key Internet Governance issues that emerged from the online discussions that were conducted on two of the country's prevalent online ICT discussion groups – 'I-Network' and 'WSIS'. The workshop was also as a follow-up on the key issues identified in the National IGF that was held in October 2006 during the preparations of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) that was held in Athens, Greece, in November 2006.

This report will also feed into the Regional East African IGF that will take place in Nairobi, Kenya on November 10-12, 2008.

Presentations:

Eng. Elisha Wasukira, the coordinator of I-Network Uganda, presented a report on the IGF online discussions that was held in August, 2008. The major issues that emerged in the discussions were;

- *Improving access and affordability*: majority of Ugandans still lack access to internet and suffer low speeds in addition to paying high prices for connectivity. Currently, Uganda doesn't have access to International fibre network. But since plans are underway to lay marine cables across the East African coast and it is believed that Uganda will benefit from these fibres and eventually there might be a reduction in the cost of internet access in Uganda.
- *Control of the country-code Top Level Domain ccTLD .UG*: There is concern for change in management of the .UG. Suggestions have been made for change from a single, private company managing the ccTLD to a board of trustees with representatives from private sector, government, civil society, academia and others who will join CFI in the management of the domain name.
- *Interception of communication: freedom of expression vs. 'public good'*: the government of Uganda has drafted and published proposals for the interception of electronic communication of any user. This would allow the government to compel Internet Service Providers (ISP) to provide its agents with access to user email accounts. However, the grounds for justifying any invasion of privacy are at the desecration on the government.
- *SPAM, pornography control*: Whose responsibility is it? It has been agreed that spam and pornography control should in the hands of ISPs, network

administrators and users who should be in position to filter their networks. Otherwise spam and pornography control still remains a difficult task to handle.

- *Need for cyber laws:* The ministry of ICT has submitted three bills to Parliament for approval, that is, the cyber crime bill, e-signature bill and the e-transaction bill. It is believed that once approved by Parliament, these will help in combating internet crime/fraud that is on the increase in Uganda. However, Uganda may not have the technological and human resources to enforce these laws.
- *Local content/Ugandan languages on the Internet:* The amount of local content in Uganda leaves a lot to be desired. It has been felt that localisation including local languages should be increased especially in areas such as health, education, market information, agriculture, local administration, and other areas of life and administration which are useful to people as they go about their daily lives as individuals and as citizens. The creation of such content and applications with a high utility value for the community would support the uptake of ICT services and perhaps increase demand for e-government programmes.

Other key issues identified were whether Ugandans have the capacity to take advantage of the Internet and the role of government in IG and whether they are doing enough.

Eng. Wasukira also mentioned that in a recent meeting by the ICT policy committee another key issue discussed was whether Uganda as a country needed to get involved in international Internet governance meetings to raise awareness about the country's IG concerns.

Mr. Timothy McGinnis, an Internet Infrastructure Consultant, presented the State of the Internet in Uganda. He noted that Uganda has no access to international fibres and can only access the internet via satellite. This has caused slow connections and continuous consumer dissatisfaction. Mr. McGinnis said that new technologies in the market like WiMax, 2/3G mobile connectivity, Blackberry mobile phones, the iPhones, Android G1 are increasing demand for mobile internet. He noted that there are 41 million internet users vs. 260 million mobile phone users in Africa. Globally, internet access is becoming mobile and there for the local telecom providers should provide opportunities for people to connect this way.

He presented a project, a web portal that will track internet availability in Uganda. The project is intended to build on the work that I-Network has been doing in building an "Internet Guide for Rural Uganda". The web portal is built based on the UK model of a website that compares broadband prices. Currently, a survey is being done to determine what type of content internet users are interested in finding on the portal. On this portal, consumers will be able to access technology costs, maps of bandwidth and pricing options (what is available and where). Data will come from ISPs and the users themselves, Mr. McGinnis added. The web portal will also be under continuous reviews from the end users and network administrators. For the ISPs, he said that the website will act as an advertising/marketing platform for their services that will enable consumers know about the different products/services they offer. It will also act as a platform for researchers to access and review data on ICT4D and ICT policy issues.

Mr. McGinnis also noted that the project will need different stakeholder involvement that is ISPs, consumers, government and the general public in order to register successes.

Dr. David Turahi, on behalf of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, presented the role of government in improving access and what government has done to address IG issues. He said that the Ministry has presented three bills to Parliament for approval. That is the Cyber Crime bill, E-transactions bill and the E-signatures bill. Once approved, these will act as a guide in handling cases on internet fraud and e-commerce respectively. However, he said that even if the cyber crime bill was passed in Uganda today, there is still a challenge providing capacity to the bodies that are supposed to handle cases of internet crime.

He also said that there needs to be a framework provided for Information security and this is still lacking. The next step is to come-up with a Data protection bill, he said.

According to Dr. Turahi, government has finished the laying of optical fibre in connecting government offices in Kampala, Entebbe, Bombo and Jinja. The next phase will be to reach large towns in the around the country. A data backup centre has also been set in Jinja.

Badru Ntege, chairman of the Internet Service Providers' Association (ISPA) of Uganda, presented Uganda's key Internet Governance issues. He highlighted that in Uganda, IG includes a wider variety of actors than just the government; that is private sector and civil society. He stressed that IG is not only about Internet domain names and address management or technical decision-making but also includes other significant public policy issues, such as Internet resources, the security and safety of the Internet, and developmental aspects and issues. He made it clear that in Uganda, the cost of internet is not regulated by the ISPs since most of the traffic is international and therefore users pay for satellite access.

Mr. Ntege said that at the content layer level Uganda needs to develop more locally relevant content, so that internet traffic remains local, thereby reducing the cost of internet access. He further noted that when it comes to the Open Technical standards, Uganda has limited control as these are mainly set by the ITU. And on the expected depletion of IPv4, Uganda does not have a strategy on the migration to IPv6. Further still, in the IP address allocation, the government of Uganda has no allocation. It is crucial for Uganda to ensure that it receives its equitable share in the IPv6 allocation.

He also called for more civil society involvement in internet governance issues and the making of an Intellectual Property Rights Law in Uganda.

Charles Musisi, Director of Computer Frontiers International (CFI) presented a paper on the .UG ccTLD Management and Operational model. He said that .UG ccTLD operational model is run on a shared registrar/registrar model. He identified some of the benefits of the model as; the model is familiar to users as it is based on what is common

for Top Level Domain (.com and .net) and that it has won some good reviews from ICANN (2003) as a model for other African ccTLDs to adopt. He further stressed that operation of the model continues to evolve as a robust registry system comparable to those being built for some of the new generic TLDs that have been established by ICANN. The model also allows for delegation of some of the data storage burden to each registrar. This allows decentralization as it increases security, functionality and stability and provides for the open source advanced system interface for registrars.

Mr. Musisi further said that management of the .UG ccTLD should remain in the care of CFI. On the issue of pricing; he said that the current fee structure is set in accordance to standard business practice and a critical mass will have to be attained for the price to drop.

Discussions:

Issues raised in the discussions include;

- *How can domain disputes be handled both locally and internationally; should Uganda develop a .UG policy?* No final agreement was reached but the proposition was left for further discussion.
- *How can internet security be improved in Uganda?* A data security law should be adopted. However, we will need capacity building of the law enforcement agencies.
- *Why is local connectivity very high especially in rural areas?* Strategies to increase bandwidth should be adopted by government on how to equally distribute internet to rural areas. The Ministry of ICT noted that infrastructure like electricity was outside its scope, but it would be working in partnership with the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources to address the issue of rural electrification.
- *Management of the .UG ccTLD:* Who should have control? No final consensus was reached, but there was a general push for the management of the .UG ccTLD to be handled in a more public manner. There were calls to set up a non-profit body manage the ccTLD in trust. This body may then license sub domains to private companies who would want to offer registry services. The body will also be responsible for marketing and branding .UG. There was also the argument that the ccTLD should be run as a national resource and government should have overall control of the ccTLD. However, Mr. Musisi, as current manager of the ccTLD, note that the current system works well and therefore should be maintained. Nonetheless, he was open to further discussion of the issue in a separate forum specifically dedicated to discussing the matter.
- *What economic factors could improve access to internet?* Need to first address rural poverty, since 80% of internet users are in urban areas. Also existing links to rural areas are more profitably used for voice communication rather than data. So for example, dial-up internet access charges in rural areas are higher.
- *IG and environment;* are there environment issues that need to be addressed? No distinct connection was readily made, but it was agreed that further research into the area was required.

- *Is gender relevant to internet governance?* Gender issues are cross-cutting in all aspects including IG. These will be addressed as they emerge.
- *Network neutrality; how neutral is the internet in Uganda?* Every effort is made to maintain network neutrality. Similarly, freedom of expression is maintained up to a point at which it may be determined to be in public interest to curtail this freedom, either for security or moral/ethical/cultural reasons. However, there was no final consensus on how this limit is determined.
- *Stakeholder involvement in Internet Governance:* what can be done to increase stakeholder influence/participation in IG? There should more importance attached to internet governance and usage to increase awareness about IG issues. Civil society needs to look at how the internet is evolving in order to determine how they can get involved in IG issues

Way Forward on Uganda's Key Issues Identified

- *Increasing access and affordability:* Government should adopt strategies to increase bandwidth to ensure equitable distribution especially in rural areas.
- *Management of .UG ccTLD:* Formation of a committee to continue discussions on who should control the .UG ccTLD and other IG issues in Uganda. This will be spearheaded by the EAICT4D network members in Uganda.
- *Capacity building* to increase participation of different stakeholders in addressing IG issues in the country.
- Increase participation in International IGF meetings to raise awareness of the country's IG concerns.
- Keep IGF active locally devising a way to revive the post WSIS follow up actions.
- Localizing local root servers in order to reduce download time
- Adoption of .UG policy to resolve domain name disputes
- Government should set limits to determine to what extent Freedom of Expression should be abused. This should be done by the Ministry of ICT and UCC
- Adoption of a data security law to help in securing private data on the internet. However, it should be everyone's responsibility to ensure that their data is secure on the internet
- Formulate a strategy on how to migrate from IPv4 to IPv6. Appendix:

ATTENDANCE LIST

No.	Name	Organisation
1	Aggrey Mugisha	Abantu for Development
2	Alex Akona	UCSD
3	Ambrose Ruyooka	Ministry of ICT
4	Arthur Oyako	Journalist - EA Business Week
5	Badru Ntege	ISPA
6	Barbara Ayebare	CPA-Uganda
7	Barbara Nassozi	Pearl of Africa Children Project
8	Bob Bakaali	Koifa Group
9	Caroline Wamala	LTU
10	Charles Musisi	Computer Frontiers International
11	Daniel Stern	UConnect
12	David Serwanga	I-network
13	David Turahi	Ministry of ICT
14	Dominic Ssekuye	Mukono Community Selfhelp Dev. Program
15	Edris Kisambira	Journalist - East African Business Week/IDG News Service
16	Elisha Wasukira	i-Network
17	Emily Arayo	African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI)
18	Emmanuel Miyingo	Makerere University
19	Enock Shikanga	UMEME
20	Esther Nakkazi	Journalist - East African Publications
21	Felix Oketcho	OK Media Consult
22	Frank Busulwa	SACI
23	Fred Lutaakome	SWON ICT Uganda
24	George Kibiike	CWIN
25	Goretti Z. Amuriat	WOUGNET
26	Gumila Mbuga	Bukoggolwa Widows and Orphans' Care Centre (BWOCC)
27	Henry Oriokot	UMAP
28	J F Kyagulanyi-Kaggwa	Satellite General Agencies
29	Jaliat Namuwaya	Journalist - Star Fm
30	James Lunghabo	Linux Solutions
31	Javie Ssozi	WOUGNET
32	Joel Ssekimpi	Uganda ICT Forum
33	John Wasswa	Katono Kewaza Farm
34	Johnstone Baguma	ToroDev
35	Jubilee Erisania Amooti	New Horizons Computer Learning Center
36	Julius Torach	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
37	Juma Kayemba	Kampala City Traders Association
38	Justine Mwanj	Uganda Forestry Association
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No.	Name	Organisation
39	Kitts Mabonga	Journalist - Red Pepper
40	Lillian Nalwoga	CIPESA
41	Mashengyero Prisca - Thembo	Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association Limited (UWEAL)
42	Maureen Agena	WOUGNET
43	Milton Aineruhanga	WOUGNET
44	Natalie Kimbugwe	i-Network
45	Patricia Kabatabazi	CIANEA-Uganda
46	Patrick Abila	Makerere University Private Sector Forum
47	Paul Tentena	Journalist - New Vision
48	Primus Bahiigi Atukwatse	Heights International
49	Reinier Battenberg	Mountbatten Ltd
50	Robert K Lutaaya	Linux Solutions
51	Samira Sawlani	CPA-Uganda Intern
52	Samson Kasozi	WECADI
53	Samuel Senfuka	CEEWA
54	Timothy McGinnis	Independent Consultant
55	Vincent Carolius Ondiff	Fintech Uganda Ltd