



Uganda Internet Governance forum 2020

Theme: *Redefining Internet Ecosystem and Policies for Inclusive Information Access During Pandemics*

When: November 12, 2020.

Where: Hybrid

The Internet Governance Forum is a global multi stakeholder platform that facilitates the discussion of public policy issues pertaining to the Internet. The Uganda Internet Governance Forum (UIGF) has since 2006 been a platform for deliberation on internet governance concerns in the country. Debates at this annual forum focus on prioritizing access and infrastructure to global trends in the internet governance agenda such as the need for increased advocacy of online freedom, protection of vulnerable users – including children and women, intermediary liability, and net neutrality. This activity will be open to all stakeholders and will require engagement from all.

The Covid -19 pandemic has impacted the way we work both offline and online. However, in the online space, it has created both opportunities and exposed disparities in the way different people access technology especially internet. As the country adapts to the technology opportunities posed by Covid -19 pandemic so is the need to keep up with emerging issues such online misinformation and disinformation, combating cybercrimes and improving quality of internet especially in underserved areas. Additionally, the increased access to broadband infrastructure in Uganda and the spread of mobile services, understanding and addressing Internet policy issues has become a priority. This calls for collaborative efforts in finding meaningful solutions to these challenges.

The UIGF2020 thus seeks to look at the current policy context and lessons learnt for the 'new normal' and any future emergencies under the theme: ***Redefining Internet Ecosystem and Policies for Inclusive Information Access During Pandemics***. More specially, the forum will tackle issues of digital inclusion and trust.

Digital Inclusion: Inclusion is about ensuring those with limited or no access to the Internet, such as the unserved and underserved communities, as well as those for which the internet is not accessible due to gender, disability, digital literacy, affordability, or for any other reason, are now included and have equal opportunity to be meaningfully connected to the internet. Inclusion is also about the activities related to the achievement of an inclusive information society, about engaging all stakeholders and ensuring everyone's voice is heard and treated equally in the decision-making processes and ensuring that everyone has the right access, skills, and motivations to reap the

social benefits of going online and participate in the digital economy. Some of the key policy questions include:

1. *What factors should be considered when seeking to understand and tackle affordability issues, and how might improvements be made?*
2. *What strategies could be developed to promote (better) Internet access for women and girls, older people, people living with disabilities, refugees and other disadvantaged groups?*
3. *Within the evolving Digital Economy, how can we get the most contribution from the different actors of the Internet ecosystem?*
4. *How do we best equip the workforce of the 21st century with the necessary skills to take advantage of the new employment opportunities that will result from digital transformation?*

Digital Trust: Digital trust is a prerequisite for the Internet to develop its potential as a tool for empowerment, a channel of free speech and an engine of economic development. In this context, trust relates to the security, stability, and resilience of the infrastructure, systems and devices, and to the need for people to be safe and secure. These are both vital elements for enabling a healthy and empowering digital environment, beneficial to all. Key policy questions include:

1. *Which policy measures could be taken for the protection, prevention and defense against cyber threats?*
2. *What role can the implementation of the principles of safety by design, privacy by design and by default as a principle play to secure human rights and achieve increased safety?*
3. *What are the responsibilities of digital platforms and public authorities in regulating or policing content, and where and how should the balance be struck between freedom of expression and public safety?*
4. *What is digital sovereignty, is it positive or negative, and how are national and international laws applied in cyberspace?*

Outcomes

- Creation of opportunities to share best practices and experiences;
- Identification of emerging issues and bringing them to the attention of the relevant bodies and the public; and,
- Contribution to capacity building for Internet governance.