Rwanda Internet Governance Forum 2023

Park Inn by Radisson Hotel- Kigali, Rwanda | 03 August 2023

"The Internet We Want- Empowering all People"

In collaboration with

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1. Introduction:

The 2023 edition of Rwanda Internet Governance Forum (RWIGF) was held on the 3rd August 2023 at Park Inn by Radisson Hotel, Kigali-Rwanda. The main objective of this year's forum was to optimize the opportunity for open and inclusive dialogue on Internet Governance and related matters while creating opportunities for shared best practices and experiences; identifying emerging issues and bringing to attention relevant bodies and the general public on pertinent and legitimate governance matters while contributing to capacity building in the Internet ecosystem. This multistakeholder Forum brought together the government, private sector, civil society, media, the technical and academic community for a discussion on the Internet governance matters.

The forum was graced by the Minister of the Ministry of ICT & Innovation, Hon. Paula Ingabire as the Guest of honor, Keynote speaker, Dr. Ozonnia Ojielo the UN Resident Coordinator to Rwanda, senior officials and other distinguished representatives from local and international entities who shared their experiences and expertise on discussed matters through speeches, panels and presentations.

Serving into the global philosophy of Internet governance, the forum mainstreamed thought-process on the four (4) main discussion topics;
1. Internet Access, Affordability and Digital Services and Empowerment:
2. Emerging technologies, Online safety and security:
3. AI Policy for Rwanda
4. Data Protection Law in Rwanda.

2. Participation:

Rwanda IGF2023 was attended by 230 participants, 203 in person and 27 online. The Youtube had 337 Views and among the organizations represented the public sector, we noticed the presence of:

1. The Ministry of ICT and Innovation, MINICT;
2. The Rwanda National Police, RNP
3. Rwanda Utility Regulatory Authority, RURA
4. National Cyber Security Authority, NCSA
5. Rwanda Information Society Authority, RISA
6. Rwanda Investigation Bureau, RIB
7. Irembo

From the private sector, we noticed the presence of:
1. The Private Sector Federation;
2. Internet Service Providers;
3. Internet Resellers

From the Civil Society, we noticed the presence of:

1. Internet Society, ISOC Rwanda chapter
2. Internet Society Foundation
3. UN
4. Media

From the Academia, we noticed the presence of:
1. University of Tourism, Technology and Business Studies, UTB
2. Africa Institute of Mathematics and Science, AIMS
3. Africa Leadership University-ALU
4. University of Kigali

And more from technical community and media house.

3. Opening Remarks:

Mr. Alex NTALE, CEO ICT Chamber and RICTA Board Member

In his opening remarks, Mr. Alex NTALE welcomed all participants in the room and those following online and highlighted the importance of Rwanda IGF as a platform that brings together public and private sector stakeholders along with Academia and civil society actors to discuss pertinent issues, opportunities and frameworks needed for Internet Governance.

He recognized the presence of the Guest of Honor, Hon. Paula INGABIRE, Minister of the Ministry of ICT and Innovation; and all other distinguished speakers of the day. Mr. Alex expressed the gratitude of appreciation to members, partners and sponsors of Rwanda IGF2023 edition that made it happen successfully. Speaking from organizers' perspective;

- The Internet Governance Forum is very important platform that brings government, private sector, civil society, media, the technical and academic community together for policy dialogue on Internet governance.
- Internet levels plain field in a way that all people in the world can access content at same level. For instance, in Education people can have access to educational content online at the same level because of Internet.
- We make a call to Internet users, Internet promoters like private sector that builds solutions, and different agencies to foster on RW-IGF discussions.
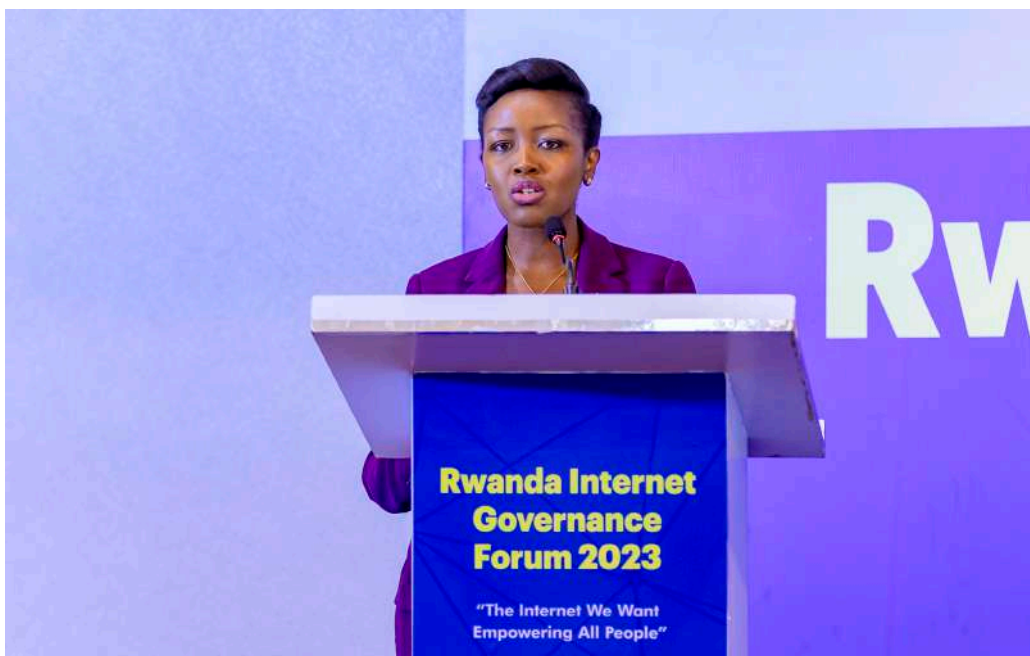
4. Keynotes Address;

Dr. Ozonnia Ojielo, the UN Resident Coordinator to Rwanda

While addressing the RW-IGF2023 Participants through his recorded message, Dr. Ozonnia Ojielo, the UN Resident Coordinator in Rwanda started his keynote speech by thanking the Hon. Minister Paula INGABIRE for her invitation to this important Annual National IGF and applauded the importance and strength of hosting it as it is a good platform of connecting different key players from public, private, civil society, academia, Researchers and development partners to collectively work together to find solutions of having the Internet We Want that Empowers all people.

Dr. Ozonnia also expressed his appreciation for the government of Rwanda for a recommendable work done towards having an Internet that empowers all Rwanda in the digital Global. He emphasized the UN collective efforts to continue working with Rwanda Government and partners to ensure the fundamental principles of connect, respect and protect are always at the heart of giving the Internet that empowers everyone. From the UN's perspective;

- Internet has become integral part of our daily lives transcending geographical boundaries, connecting individuals, communities and nations in unprecedented ways.

- Internet has become a gate way to knowledge, a catalyst for innovation and an enabler of opportunities.

- The Internet we want is should not be a privilege but a fundamental right accessible to all.

- The Internet we want must prioritize inclusivity and accessibility of every Rwandan to partake the benefits it offers.

- We must come together to bridge the digital divide leaving no one behind so that everyone can harness the vast potential of the digital world.

- We must strive to promote digital literacy, skills development, empowering Rwandans with Knowledge and expertise to navigate digital landscape confidently.

- Rwanda has achieved 2 profound achievements of having AI Policy and Data Protection Law in place which is a testimony of its commitment to advancing technology, innovation and safeguarding the rights of its citizens. Showing Rwanda's readiness to embrace the fourth industrial revolution.

- We must come together around Global Digital Compact to avoid fragmentation, safeguard human rights and ensure technology is force for human wellbeing, solidarity and progress.

Hon. Paula INGABIRE, the Minister of Ministry of ICT & Innovation

While addressing the RW-IGF2023 participants, Hon. Paula started her Keynote Speech by thanking and applauding the organizing committee and the partners for making the Rwanda IGF 2023 edition happen. She highlighted that the theme "The We Want- Empowering All

People" voices for the citizens and argued all participants in the room to wear the shoes of the citizens and find lasting resolutions from the forum. Speaking from a government' perspective;

- Internet Governance Forum is key and important forum that brings together different partners and players to work together and collaborate to not only discuss Internet pertinent issues but also find solutions together.
- The Internet we want for our citizens is the Internet that is the basic right to everyone.
- The Internet must be accessible and affordable to citizens, must be relevant to them in terms of content, and must be trusted and secured.
- Connectivity itself is not sufficient and that is why we have to ensure that our citizens have the right and relevant digital literacy skills, how we are promoting the penetration of devices.
- Part of Government's efforts beyond having a last mile connectivity is ensuring that most of our citizens have smart devices but also make sure that the content and applications built create right value proportion to the citizens.
- The Minister's call to action to Telecom Operators, ISPs, Policy makers, regulators, content and applications creators and device companies is to ensure that these important elements of Internet; Accessibility, Affordability, relevance, Trust and Security are always considered when delivering the Internet.
- The government urges players not to neglect Governance of Data and Safeguarding of privacy. Data plays a critical role in ensuring that we have a relevant and meaningful connectivity.
- With the existence of Data Protection Office (DPO), we should ensure that Data is used in innovation sharing but in a manner that enhances information accuracy.
- The biggest call for all of us is to put ourselves in the shoes of our citizens and make sure we provide a relevant and meaningful Internet we want for our people.
- The government is highly committed to ensuring that all Rwandans have access to Internet, but also affordable and relevant Internet.

5. Panel Discussions, Presentations and Key Deliberations:
The Forum had two (2) main panels with experts to discuss on the two (2) main thematic tracks namely; (1) Internet Access, Affordability, Digital Services and Empowerment, (2) Data Protection Law in Rwanda; and also had two (2) main presentations delivered by experts in the industry, namely; (1) Emerging technologies, Online Safety & Security and (2) AI Policy for Rwanda.

Key deliberations were recorded after discussions;

5.1 Internet Access, Affordability, and Digital Services Empowerment:

The Panel discussing Internet Access, Affordability, and Digital Services Empowerment:
The panel had the presentation of the Regulator-RURA, Internet Service Provider- Liquid Rwanda, Internet Society & Digital Public Services-IREMBO. The Panel addressed issues related to making the internet accessible to all Rwandans, regardless of their location or economic status. Speakers focused on strategies to improve internet infrastructure, reduce the cost of connectivity, and promote the availability of digital services. The empowerment aspect was discussed and resolved that Internet access will uplift individuals and communities by providing educational, economic, and social opportunities.

5.2 Emerging Technologies, Online Safety, and Security:

Mrs. Josephine NYIRANZEYIMANA, GCIO- Rwanda Information Society Authority
Mrs. Josephine's Presentation explored 5 New Emerging Technologies including;

1. Quantum Computing
2. Metaverse
3. Brain Computer Interface (BCIs)
4. Synthetic Biology
5. Advanced Robotics and Automation

She explained the risks associated with Emerging Technologies (ET), Tips for online safety, Cyber-security measures and Child online safety. After her presentation, discussions centered around harnessing these technologies for societal benefits while addressing concerns about online safety and cybersecurity. The forum argued the relevant bodies to prioritize data privacy, combating cyber threats, and ensuring responsible and ethical use of technology.

However much Emerging technologies offer exciting possibilities, but they also come with risks. Therefore, the forum argued to prioritize online safety and cyber security to protect ourselves and others in this digital era".

5.3 AI Policy for Rwanda:

Mr. Joris CYIZERE, Ag. MD, Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution Rwanda
Mr. Joris' presentation delved into Rwanda's Artificial intelligence (AI) policy and why it is important. The AI policy has five national objectives; Positioning Rwanda as Africa's AI lab, Creating an Open Data Ecosystem as an enabler of the AI Revolution, Driving Public Sector Transformation to Fuel AI Adoption, Accelerating Responsible AI Adoption in the Private Sector and Building AI Literacy and 21st Century Skills.

The forum's resolved on the following;
- The Rwandan community should leverage on AI for economic growth, social development, and innovation.
- AI adoption should be accelerated by enabling the rapid growth of Rwanda's AI ecosystem, fostering the adoption of AI in high growth sectors, and scaling public and private sector investment in AI.

- The efforts to raise public awareness on AI, the understanding of AI policy and its benefits should be put in place.

5.4 Data Protection Law in Rwanda:

The Panel discussing Data Protection law in Rwanda

The panel had the presentation of Data Protection Office-NCSA, Law enforcement office-Rwanda Investigation Bureau, Private sector & Customers' Rights Association. The discussions revolved around personal data privacy and protection regulations within Rwanda. Conversations touched on the importance of safeguarding individuals' personal information, the rights of data subjects, responsibilities of organizations handling personal data, the categories of individuals/organizations handling personal data (Data controllers and Data Processors), mechanisms for enforcement, and strategies for public awareness of the existing data protection law and how the law can work for the public. The forum argued the Data Protection Office (DPO) to ensure that the public is aware and the law is implemented in the benefit of the owner of the data (Data subjects).

For more details on Rwanda Internet Governance Forum 2023 Edition, visit the following link: **RW-IGF2023 Discussion**