

FGI AC/ IGF AC CONTRIBUTION

Strategic Contribution of the Central African Internet Governance Forum (CAF-IGF) to the WSIS+20 Process

1. Introduction and Strategic Posture

Twenty years after the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), Central Africa finds itself at a turning point: that of sovereign appropriation of its digital destiny. Rich in human and natural resources, the region still faces structural challenges: a persistent digital divide, unequal access to infrastructure, and low participation in international governance bodies.

The Central African Internet Governance Forum (CAG-IFG) asserts itself as the space for open, inclusive and multi-stakeholder dialogue essential for articulating regional realities with international dynamics, in fidelity to the founding spirit and the WSIS Lines of Action.

2. IGF-AC Vision for WSIS+20: Achievement and Sovereignty

While the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) succeeded in laying the foundations for a human-centered information society, the WSIS+20 process must absolutely mark a stage of concrete implementation and strategic breakthrough.

The FGI-AC believes that this exercise should focus on:

- The effective realization of digital rights for all citizens.
- Measurable Reduction of Inequalities and the Digital Divide.
- The Affirmation of the Technological Sovereignty of the countries of the South.

The Central African Internet Governance Forum (CAGIF) advocates for a strengthened and proactive integration of African priorities in the redefinition of the post-2025 agenda. This approach is crucial to ensure that the global digital architecture accurately reflects and serves Africa's concrete development and innovation needs.

Given that the IGF is a collaborative innovation force based on multi-stakeholder dialogue, we urge governments and institutions to elevate the WSIS+20 process to a major policy priority for national digital development. By making inclusive dialogue a pillar of policy, we will be able to experiment, adjust, and propose scalable solutions aligned with the new challenges of global digitalization.

3. Concrete Proposals for the Post-2025 WSIS

A. Equitable Access and Resilient Infrastructure

- **Innovative financing:** accelerate the deployment of infrastructure in rural and marginalized areas through solidarity and innovative financing mechanisms, beyond traditional aid.
- **Regional harmonization:** promote national universal access policies aligned with regional standards and frameworks (ITU, AU, ECCAS).

B. Capacity Building and Strategic Inclusion

- **Sustainability of Schools of Governance:** Ensure sustainable financial and institutional support for regional training initiatives, including the Schools on Internet Governance (SIG). The objective is to build a critical mass of highly qualified and influential African experts, capable of active and informed engagement within ICANN, the ITU, and the WSIS Forum.
- **Active and Equitable Inclusion:** Establish mentoring programs and dedicated funding mechanisms specifically targeting youth, women, underrepresented groups, and island countries. This effort is essential to ensure equitable and meaningful participation of all stakeholders in global digital decision-making processes.
- **Regional Harmonization and Exchanges:** Establish effective mechanisms for coordination and structured exchange between countries in the sub-region and with global stakeholders. These platforms should facilitate the harmonization of digital policies and the accelerated sharing of best practices in regulation and development.
- **Multi-stakeholder and Institutional Engagement:** Promote the active and systematic engagement of all stakeholders: Governments, Civil Societies, Private Sector, Technical Communities, Parliamentarians and International Organizations – in Internet governance processes, from national to regional and continental levels.

C. Digital Sovereignty and Green Economy

- **Local accommodation:** promote local storage of sensitive data and stimulate the growth of African digital solutions (cloud, AI, regional platforms), in order to reduce external dependence.
- **Sustainable digital:** integrate the ecological dimension into all digital policies, by encouraging Green ICT, to ensure digital growth aligned with the SDGs and climate commitments.

D. Multi-stakeholder Governance and Regional Networks

- **Recognition of regional hubs:** Institutionalize and sustainably fund regional forums such as the AfIGF and the FGI-AC, which are true catalysts for the multi-stakeholder approach and the translation of the global to the local. Support the permanent secretariat.

- **Aligning agendas:** Harmonize WSIS+20 with the Pact for the Future and the Global Digital Compact, by identifying complementarities and avoiding redundancies.

4. Conclusion and Call to Action

The WSIS+20 process must not be limited to a symbolic commemoration. It must mark a step in the strategic re-establishment of the Information Society, moving from declarations of intent to concrete actions capable of placing Internet governance at the service of the legitimate aspirations and development needs of long-marginalized regions.

Central Africa affirms its determination to transform its digital potential into a true engine of growth, sovereignty, and innovation. Our message is clear: Central Africa is ready to fully play its role as a strategic actor and credible partner in implementing the WSIS+20 commitments. But this contribution requires a fair, respectful, and sustainable partnership, supported by targeted institutional and financial support.

The Central African Internet Governance Forum (CAGIF) reaffirms its full commitment. Drawing on its technical expertise, multi-stakeholder network, and in-depth knowledge of local realities, it is ready to actively contribute to building an inclusive, just, and sovereign digital future, where the voice of Central Africa carries weight in global decisions.

The legacy of the WSIS will be measured not by its rhetoric, but by its real capacity to reduce the digital divide and give Central Africa the strategic place it deserves in global digital governance.