

**COMMUNIQUE**

**ISSUED AT THE END OF THE**

**VIRTUAL NIGERIA INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM**

**(vNIGF) 2020 EVENTS**



**NIGERIA INTERNET  
GOVERNANCE FORUM**  

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**HELD**

**ON**

**SEPTEMBER 23 – 24, 2020**

## ***Introduction***

The annual Nigeria Internet Governance Forum (NIGF) helps to facilitate partnerships and dialogue between various stakeholders, aimed at redefining the position of Nigeria at regional and global IGF meetings. The ninth NIGF was held as a virtual event tagged *Virtual Nigeria Internet Governance Forum (vNIGF) 2020* in adherence to the ban on large gatherings by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The vNIGF 2020 was a hybrid event as some of the major stakeholders in the Nigerian Internet Community were physically present at the Communication and Digital Economy Complex Mborah, Abuja, Nigeria, while other participants joined virtually.

The vNIGF 2020 was organized by the Nigeria Internet Governance Forum Multistakeholder Advisory Group (NIGF-MAG) which is a collaborative effort of the Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy (FMCDE), the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), the Nigeria Internet Registration Association (NiRA), ISOC Nigeria Chapter, DigitalSense Africa, with other Internet Stakeholders. The vNIGF 2020 which held on 24th September 2020 focused on discussing how the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the critical importance of digital technologies in fostering inclusive national development. The vNIGF 2020 was preceded by the Youth Nigeria Internet Governance Forum (YNIGF) and Women Nigeria Internet Governance Forum (WNIGF) which held in parallel on 23rd September 2020.

## ***Nigeria Youth Internet Governance Forum (NYIGF): September 23, 2020***

### **Observations**

The theme for the 2020 NYIGF event was “*Shaping a resilient Internet for societal sustainability.*” There was a high-level panel discussion that focused on the 2020 NYIGF theme, followed by four concurrent breakout sessions with the under listed themes. Finally, there was a wrap-up session.

- i) Building capacity of the Nigerian Youth in Web Literacy and ICT Skills in the era of COVID19
- ii) Role of the Nigerian Youth in the global Internet Economy
- iii) Impact of connectivity on e-businesses and e-commerce in Nigeria
- iv) Cybersecurity & Cybercrime - Enabling a secure and sustainable internet for all

### **Observations from the YNIGF 2020 High-Level Panel Discussion:**

The following key points were raised at the high-level panel discussion:

1. The technical community has a huge role to play in building capacity.
2. Nigeria needs a judicial system that works effectively.
3. Users of the Internet need to have a sense of responsible use of the Internet. While the technical organization creates an efficient technical measurement for a safe and secure internet environment.
4. There is a need to create spaces for youth participation in internet related conversations. It is important for policy and decision makers to listen to young people in order to understand what they want.
5. The more we engage the youth in creating useful contents that reflect our culture and essence, the more we have the right engagement.

### **Recommendations from the YNIGF 2020 High-Level Panel Discussion:**

The following suggestions were made during the high-level panel discussion:

1. Relevant government agencies should focus on closing the digital divide and including young people in policy development.
2. Nigeria has one of the lowest numbers of community networks in Africa. There is a need to approach capacity building in various ways such as community networks, events and using other capacity building opportunities.
3. The government should do its bit by creating an adequate law that respects human rights not just focusing on punishing the crime.
4. We need to build communities (online and offline) where people can connect to learn

**From the different breakout sessions of the YNIGF 2020, the following key observations and recommendations were made:**

#### ***Breakout Session 1: Building capacity of the Nigerian Youth in Web Literacy and ICT Skills in the era of COVID-19***

##### **Observations:**

1. Nigerian youth face many challenges in terms of capacity building capacity in the areas of Web Literacy and ICT Skills. The challenges include: high cost of data and internet services, lack

of access to Internet-enabled devices, poor, indiscipline of youth toward learning, and lack of collaboration between stakeholders.

2. There should be strong collaboration between public and private sectors.
3. There is need to provide alternative means of learning, using offline content strategy

**Recommendations:**

1. More learning platforms should be created with easy user experience
2. Government should do more to build the capacity of public-school teachers, this will help them to relate with the students better on ICT.

***Breakout Session 2: Role of the Nigerian Youth in the Global Internet Economy.***

**Observations:**

1. Youth are at the forefront of using the internet as a tool for development, justice, and social change in our communities.
2. Nigerian youth should get more involved in policy development processes that shape the internet through internet governance because they are the future of Nigeria in the Global Internet Economy.
3. Capacity and human capital development of Nigerian Youth in emerging technologies such as IoT, AI and blockchain technologies will accelerate the pace of technological.

**Recommendations:**

1. Government should improve school curriculums to incorporate technology trends, and proper use of the internet and social media.
2. Government should empower the youth so as to engage them in more meaningful and constructive online/social media activities and limit their exposure to the negative aspects of the Internet.
3. Parents should as a matter of urgency, monitor the activities of their wards on the internet.
4. Schools should set up cyber monitoring teams to checkmate the effects of illegal activities on the internet.
5. Government should ensure that Nigeria has an adequate and effective online child protection law
6. The Nigerian Youth should get more involved in internet economy discussion

***Breakout Session 3: Impact of Connectivity on e-businesses and e-commerce in Nigeria.***

**Observations:**

1. Digital divide in the areas of material and usability issues
2. Lack of infrastructure hinders e-business development
3. Literacy issues among the youth and business community were raised
4. E-business and e-commerce in Nigeria are faced with cost and trust problems
5. Logistics issues for e-business operations
6. Policy and regulatory issues. Especially changes in policy that affect platform operations
7. Increase in cybercrime activities
8. Youth are spending too much time on politics in the online environment, rather than doing business.
9. Access such as 5G will result in equipment manufacturing and creating more business opportunities in Nigeria.

**Recommendations:**

1. State governments should engage more in investment in connectivity. For example Lagos State Government should do more in the aspect of fiber optics cable laying as 3000km is good but not enough.
2. More resources should be channeled towards the provision of access. This should be given the same priority as fighting of cybercrime.
3. Stakeholders should adopt innovative approach in doing business in the Nigeria environment
4. There is a need for investment in low bandwidth technology in Nigeria by the government, private and civil society actors.
5. There is need for youth to leveraging on the existing platform for business promotion

***Breakout Session 4: Cybersecurity & Cybercrime - Enabling a secure and sustainable internet for all.***

**Observations:**

1. Nigeria has a large tech savvy young population. Their potential to engage in cybercrime may be influenced by socio-economic factors including lack of quality education and job opportunities.

2. Common avenues for cybercrime or cybersecurity breaches online stem from password leaks and sharing of sensitive personal information. 66% of cybersecurity breaches are caused by weak passwords.
3. Oversharing on social media may lead to leak of personal information such as location, date of birth, mother's maiden names.
4. In the past, questionable organizations/individuals have developed a business out of compromising the networks or systems using phishing emails.
5. Biometric identity creates a higher level of security compared to passwords. Regulations such as the 2019 Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) will provide guidelines to support the use of biometric identity for security in Nigeria.
6. Things posted on social media should remain private and very generic. Cherish your social media share
7. Tips for creating a good password: Use alphanumeric passwords, make use of sentences, use uppercase and lowercase characters, and change passwords often.

**Recommendations:**

1. Nigerian youth need more role models for expected behaviour in cyberspace. They should be made aware of the dos and don'ts of the internet.
2. Internet users should make a conscious effort to establish a strong defense to accessing their personal devices.
3. Internet users should engage themselves in capacity building workshops to develop their basic cybersecurity awareness.
4. When possible make use of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) and encrypted software and networks.
5. Internet stakeholders should create strong regulations and laws that support the use of biometric identity in Nigeria.
6. The Nigerian government should empower the youth to increase their standard of living. This will potentially reduce budding dependency for crime within the country.
7. Young Nigerians should identify how they can contribute to building the digital economy through digital skills development.

### ***Women Nigeria Internet Governance Forum (WNIGF): September 23, 2020***

The WNIGF 2020 event, themed “*Women, COVID-19 and the Internet*” discussed the following topics:

- i) Women and the internet policy space in Nigeria
- ii) Women, domestic violence and the Lockdown due to COVID 19
- iii) Women digital marginality and the imperative of remote working
- iv) Education, employment and access to internet for women
- v) Promoting greater access to internet for women
- vi) Women and digital entrepreneurship

Resource persons noted that women face many challenges related to ICT and internet governance such as: low proportion of women in decision making positions, family commitments, low literacy level, high unemployment and poverty rate, persistent harassment and discrimination, perceived lack of relevant online contents, insufficient consideration for matters affecting women in policy making, socio-cultural and economic problems.

### **Observations**

The following observations were made:

1. The pandemic period was a period where high domestic violence was recorded and lack of connectivity and government policy heightened the matter.
2. Women need educational and economic empowerment
3. Women do not have equal access to the internet as the men
4. Women can do all sort of things in the society and can contribute immensely to the society and economy but they are not recognized as their male counterparts, that trend ought to change
5. For various reasons, the Internet is not available in the same proportion for everyone in the world. It is even worse for women, who make up a good number of the world population. The situation gets worse when one considers women in developing countries, those living with disabilities and in the rural areas
6. Statistics has it that worldwide, only about 16% of women are online
7. Statistics from NCC states 42.02% Nigerians have broadband subscription as of July 2020
8. Women make up about half of the population of Nigeria.

9. Play key roles such as mothers, teachers, CEOs, managers, community promoters / organizers, doctors, etc.
10. Contribute immensely to the social and economic development of Nigerian society, as business owners, entrepreneurs, and leaders.
11. Hard working, breadwinners.
12. Earn less than their male counterpart on the same job role.

**Recommendations:**

1. Develop and Implement smart policies that are women centered that will be beneficial to women.
2. Government should make deliberate effort to close the gender gap for Internet Access.
3. Provision of infrastructure facilities (stable electricity and internet access, affordable devices, etc.).
4. More women should be involved in mentoring women
5. More publicity for women to engage in ICT.
6. Government should check cyber bullying activities, especially those targeted at women.
7. Content developers should provide contents that are relevant to the diversity of women (culture, language, religion, age, educational lever, etc.).
8. Consider and boost the internet skill level of women.
9. Education on the safety of the Internet, thus the girl-child should be given equal educational opportunities as her brother.
10. Government should make the internet more affordable for women

***vNIGF 2020 Event: September 24, 2020***

The theme for vNIGF 2020 was “Achieving Inclusive Digital Economic Development in the Post-COVID19 Era.” The vNIGF addressed the following subthemes:

- i) Data Sovereignty and Monetization – bringing value to data and increasing potentials for a value-driven data economy;
- ii) Cybersecurity and Trust – improving personal safety of individuals and businesses, investment in national infrastructure, and countering cyber terrorism to enable growth of the industry;
- iii) Digital Empowerment – challenges and opportunities for inclusive digital development; and



iv) Emerging Issues and Technologies – considerations for achieving ICT application in key sectors of the country.

The Executive Vice Chairman/CEO of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta gave the opening remarks, stating that the outcome of the Forum is expected to build consensus among stakeholders on actionable recommendations for both state and non-state actors in the internet ecosystem.

The Director General/CEO, National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Mr. Kashifu Inuwa Abdullahi (CCIE) represented by Dr. Vincent Olatunji, stated that the Internet has brought about many reforms in the way of doing business in the public sector, which has resulted in increased revenue for the government, hence e-governance is more necessary now with the Covid-19 era.

The first Vice President of the Association of Telecommunications Companies of Nigeria (ATCON), Engr. Ikechukwu Nnamani represented the organization and stated that telecommunications companies are fully aware of the digital age and its challenges, and the pandemic has mandated they begin implementing their five-year plan.

Chairman IGF-MAG, Anriette Esterhuysen, in her recorded message stated that despite the challenge of the pandemic, the IGF will share and collaborate with NIGF to address challenging issues, which would be discussed at the general IGF in November 2020.

The Honorable Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Dr. Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami who gave the keynote address stated that the government has expanded the agencies and put some policies in place to address the challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic.

The President Nigeria Internet Registration Association (NiRA), Mr. Muhammed Rudman gave the vote of thanks as the opening ceremony came to a close, and wished all participants fruitful deliberations.

In all, there were about 200 participants (online and onsite) who attended the vNIGF 2020, including participants from public institutions, private sector groups, civil societies, professional bodies, students and youths, media and the public.

### **Observations from the Plenary Session:**

The following were observed during the Plenary of the 9<sup>th</sup> Nigeria Internet Governance Forum,

1. The Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy (FMCDE) fully supports digital inclusion, notably with the launching of three vital documents: Nigerian National Broadband Plan (2020-2025), the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NDEPS), and the Roadmap for implementation of the Digital Economy Policy and Strategy
2. Nigeria has a 43.3% broadband penetration rate by the end of August 2020, implying that about 120 million Nigerians are digitally excluded.
3. The contribution of ICT to Nigeria's GDP has been increasing over the last few years.
4. The recent reduction/waiving of right of way charges by state governments will reduce the cost of Internet connectivity.
5. The challenge is that the network providers still need a lot of additional infrastructure.
6. Social media platforms such as WhatsApp have been revolutionary to the growth of small businesses.
7. Research has shown a direct relationship between Internet access rate and GDP.

### **Recommendations from the Plenary Session:**

The following recommendations were proffered during the Opening of the Forum, viz:

1. Relevant stakeholders such as the Human Rights Commission should push for Internet access to become a human right.
2. There should be collaboration between government and all other stakeholders to develop needed infrastructure to help provide affordable Internet to all Nigerians.
3. Basic digital literacy should be provided for citizens.

**From the different breakout sessions, the following key observations and recommendations were made:**

#### ***Breakout Session 1: Data Sovereignty and Monetization***

##### **Observations**

1. More than half of the Nigerian population is currently digitally excluded. Therefore, access to Internet should be categorized as a fundamental human right.
2. Infrastructure is a critical pillar needed to achieve digital economy and inclusiveness of all Nigerians.

3. Illegitimate use of citizens data without their consent through some social media handles, apps, etc.
4. New emerging opportunities to monetize data in Nigeria; In new revenue streams, products and services for a broader range of stakeholders, enable by data insights and analytics
5. Several state governments have reduced or waived the right of way charges.
6. There is a divide in the level of inclusion in urban and rural environments.
7. Nigerians are largely technology consumers and not producers, and thus have no data sovereignty.
8. Regulation on fiber optic cables usage and protection is already being developed.
9. There is need to regulate the cost to data to aide inclusion and broadband penetration.
10. There is need to ensure that measures put in place to control access are not excessive so as not to prevent optimal usage of the Internet.
11. The Digital Economy Era should be harnessed to build the financial capacity of Nigerian youth.
12. Although digital literacy is the second pillar of our Digital Economy Strategy, it has not been effectively implemented.
13. Mobile data can be used for security planning, mobility plan and traffic planning for national development.
14. There should be collaboration among government, private sector organizations and stakeholders to harness data for National Development.
15. There is need for Nigeria as a country to move into an era of National self-sufficiency. The government should work towards making citizens self-sufficient technologically.
16. There is need to vigorously build capacity in the area of digital literacy.
17. The need to harness the African Continental free trade area to create a single African market

### **Recommendations from Breakout Session 1**

1. Relevant Government agencies should work with relevant human rights stakeholders to ensure that access to the Internet is a fundamental human right of the citizen, on the same level with the right to life and health care.

2. Nigerians should take responsibility for the protection of their personal data by reading through terms and conditions of products and applications and strive to join in building regulation policies.
3. The federal government, state governments and private sector should increase their collaboration to ensure that Nigeria achieves the goal of increased Internet access.
4. Government should forgo short term benefits of ICT investment, such as taxes and fees, and focus more on long term investment in infrastructure and capacity building.

### ***Breakout Session 2: Cybersecurity & Trust***

#### **Observations**

1. The need to develop a National Strategy for the operation and financing of a data ecosystem;
2. The need to strengthen capacity in order to build resilience;
3. The need to identify the demand for actionable, policy relevant insights and public good applications: convene countries, companies, academics, civil society, and international actors to match the data available with technological capabilities for generating insights in real time at any scale;
4. There is need to have political will, commitment and influence. It is important that every country in the West African Region records success stories and impacts that can be shared with one another country;
5. The need to establish sustainable trust ecosystem that leverages private sector participation;
6. The need to Leverage on Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR): Design new ways to give individuals more control over their data, protecting privacy and implementing privacy by design;
7. The need to strengthen infrastructure and inefficiency including the energy sectors;
8. The need to address the existing gaps in Legal and Regulatory frameworks. It is important that the African Union (AU) also known as the Malabo convention and the Budapest convention are ratified from the AU perspective;
9. The need to increase community immunity;
10. The need to localize Cybersecurity awareness campaigns;
11. The need for a robust Cybersecurity incidence reporting center; and
12. The effect of celebrating materialism.
13. Rise in cyber criminalities due to high usage of the Internet in Nigeria.

14. Lack of effective policies and Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT) in the West African Region.
15. Lack of collaborations between countries in the same region.
16. Lack of enforcement of legal and regulatory frameworks.
17. Lack of well-equipped and sophisticated hardware to track cyber criminals in Nigeria.
18. Citizen orientation and reorientation is paramount.
19. There is need to strengthen the international and mutual cooperation in combating cybercrime to reduce the level of dependence on the developed world;
20. There is need to broaden the scope of National Cybersecurity Awareness Month (NCSAM) as initiated by Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC).

### **Recommendations from Breakout Session 2**

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria should ratify the Malabo Convention in order to unify implementations of cybersecurity and data protection regulations across Africa;
2. The government should setup a dedicated agency focused on dealing with cyber related crimes. Alternatively, there should be cyber policing within the police force;
3. Government should invest more in getting state of the art and technology-driven systems as well as building capacity for use of such to enable cybercrime management and resolution;
4. All stakeholders including government should ensure compliance with national and international standard security standards and certificates;
5. The government should provide the full support required to enable full functionality of NCC CERT.

### ***Breakout Session 3: Digital Empowerment***

#### **Observations**

1. Lack of education and employment leads to crime
2. The amount of infrastructure in the country hampers digital development
3. There is challenge in Settlement of Payment
4. There is a big divide between the developed and developing regions in their digital life.
5. A strong digital economy results in an increase in GDP
6. Livelihood can be sustained through the internet

7. The private sector creates ICT digital economy tools and services, the experts have the technical know-how that build infrastructure and services.
8. Core digital skills help to spur innovation to help the society
9. Businesses faced a setback, but e-commerce was an innovative solution to the pandemic for businesses.
10. National security is part of digital life because of cybersecurity and citizens data protection.
11. Collaboration is key across all strata of the society
12. There is need to improve public education and prioritize technical and technology skills.
13. Teachers' training, retraining of graduate, inclusion of the skilled informal sector should be paramount
14. There should be mentorship programmes to boost digital empowerment
15. There is need to maximize benefits of digital life

### **Recommendations**

1. It is important to foster new digital mindset and culture, by encouraging the youth to engage more in application and software development for national innovation and growth
2. In the new digital economy, skills are critical, so recruitment should be based on skills and expertise, rather than solely on certificates.
3. Citizens should be encouraged to use the internet to generate wealth, rather than mainly for leisure
4. A Digital skills policy should be formulated outlining a clear approach to develop a culture for ICT.
5. Production of hardware and other tools should be privatized by stakeholders

### ***Breakout Session 4: Emerging Issues & Technologies***

#### **Observations**

1. Lack of support for Fintech as they create innovative solutions that help ordinary Nigerians to grow their businesses
2. Tech Trends have influenced the traditional financial players as using FinTech ideas gives them better experience, it drives adoption and grows business.
3. Policies like Digital innovation and Digital Entrepreneurship should not only be prepared and kept on the table, but be implemented accordingly

4. We must go digital by not only teaching children to code, but also how to solve problems using coding.
5. Applications have been developed to enhance Telemedicine and Telehealth
6. 3D printing was used during the pandemic to rapidly develop ventilators and Test kit
7. Using 5G, a robust data app has been developed and was used by NCDC during the pandemic
8. As fitness trackers have been made available, this has increased the effect of IOT in the country
9. It is important to move away from being consumers to being investors of technology
10. Rural areas are in dire need of prioritization
11. There is need for infrastructure in both government and private sectors
12. There is urgent need for health capital development
13. Lack of Synergy between government, private sector and other stakeholders
14. Data security should be made a priority
15. Researchers should be industrial and well-funded

### **Recommendations**

1. The organized private sector should be actively involved in what happens in the academia so that they can have some inputs in the curriculum
2. The educational sector needs massive reform. Emerging trends should be incorporated in the curriculum
3. Relevant government agencies and stakeholders should ensure that laws, regulations and guidelines on data protection are enforced, without stifling growth and development of emerging technologies
4. Regulators need to adapt emerging technologies to regulate the Internet and increase Digital Trust

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