

Report
of
The 13th AfICTA (Virtual) Summit

On

November 12 - 13, 2025

by

AfICTA Secretariat

November 17, 2025

Summit Sponsored By



Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1	3
1.0 About AfICTA	3
CHAPTER 2	4
2.0 About Summit 2025	4
2.1 Overview	4
2.2 Summit Webpage	4
https://aficta.africa/summits/summit-2025	4
2.3 Programme Outline	4
CHAPTER 3	5
3.1.0 Introduction	5
3.1.1 Summit Sub Themes	6
3.2.0 Day 1	6
3.2.1 Keynote Session Watch the Recording here	6
3.2.2 First Panel Session	8
3.2.3 Second Panel Session	11
3.2.4 Third Panel Session	14
3.2.5 Fourth Panel Session	16
3.2.6 Fifth Panel Session	18
3.2.7 Sixth Panel Session	20
3.3.0 Summit & Nominating Committee	23
3.4.0 Africa ICT Award Winners	23
CHAPTER 4	24
4.1 Recommendations	24
Session 1: Digital Infrastructure for a Connected Africa: Roles of Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Based on the interventions from the panelists, the session produced the following key recommendations:	
.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1. Prioritize Meaningful and Affordable Connectivity:	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2. Encourage Regional Harmonization of Policies and Standards	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3. Strengthen Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4. Invest in Local Manufacturing and Digital Value Chains	Error! Bookmark not defined.
5. Enhance Capacity Building at All Levels	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6. Adopt SMART Digital Policies	Error! Bookmark not defined.
7. Ensure Transparency and Effective Use of Digital Development Funds	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Session 2: Digital Governance and Sovereignty in Africa: Prerequisite to fulfilling Digital Agenda	Error! Bookmark not defined.

CHAPTER 1

1.0 About AfICTA

Africa Information & Communication Technologies Alliance - AfICTA is a concerned private sector led alliance of ICT Associations, Multi-national Corporations, Companies, Organisations and individuals in the ICT sector in Africa.

Vision

Our vision is to fulfil the promise of the digital age for everyone in Africa.

Mission

Our mission is to encourage multi-stakeholder dialogue fostering accelerated and ICT enabled development in Africa and the use of cutting-edge innovative technologies including mobile, computing and satellite technologies to achieve an Information society in Africa.

Objectives

1. Organise non-government ICT stakeholders in Africa for effective local and continental advocacy
2. Be the focal point for Africa ICT advocacy in the global digital economy.
3. Promote constant improvement in African digital literacy in collaboration with stakeholders.
4. Create partnerships with the African Union and all the regional economic commissions towards realizing global sustainable development targets for Africa
5. Support effective dialogue between members and policymakers.
6. Mobilise the core leadership of African ICT professionals and experts in the business community, academic and technical community and civil society to be fully engaged in the global Internet Governance multi-stakeholder dialogues.
7. Promote business partnerships between members and their associations' members.
8. Contribute to capacities development by promoting best practices, encouraging regional projects, sharing data (skills, expertise, events, business announcements, exhibitions, seminars),
9. Organize an annual regional summit for knowledge sharing and cross-African advocacy.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 About Summit 2025

The 13th AfICTA Summit was held virtually from Wednesday 12-13 November, 2025 and themed: **“Accelerating Africa's Digital Future: Innovation, Inclusion, and Economic Growth”**

2.1 Overview

Africa's digital future holds immense potential for driving economic growth, fostering innovation, and promoting social inclusion. By harnessing the power of digital technologies, African countries can leapfrog traditional development pathways, enhance competitiveness, and create new opportunities for entrepreneurship, education, agriculture, healthcare and financial inclusion. Digital innovation can also help bridge the gap between rural and urban areas, ensuring that the benefits of digital agenda toward an explosive growth are shared more equitably across the continent.

To realize this vision, it is crucial to empower Africa’s underserved and underrepresented communities, including youth, women, and persons with disabilities, through targeted digital literacy initiatives, inclusive policy design, and grassroots engagement. With Africa’s youthful population being one of the continent's greatest assets, equipping them with digital tools for innovation, entrepreneurship, and civic participation will ensure the sustainability and inclusiveness of Africa’s digital transformation. A concerted effort across policy, infrastructure, and capacity development will be essential to overcome these hurdles and drive the continent toward its ambitious digital future. [Read more](#)

2.2 Summit Webpage

<https://aficta.africa/summits/summit-2025>

2.3 Programme Outline

<https://aficta.africa/summits/summit-2025#agenda>

CHAPTER 3

3.1.0 Introduction

The 13th AfICTA Summit Day-1



Ms. Ulandi Exner, Chair of AfICTA

The 13th edition of the AfICTA Summit commenced with a warm and engaging welcome, acknowledging the presence of key AfICTA members, board members, partners, and distinguished guests. The moderator highlighted the importance of active participation through networking and interaction, while also recognizing the crucial support of sponsors and partners that made the summit possible. AfICTA was introduced as a platform dedicated to improving African digital literacy, fostering partnerships with the African Union and regional economic commissions, promoting business and professional development, and creating opportunities for knowledge sharing through its annual summit. Among the notable member organizations represented were **Kontemporary Konsulting Ltd, IITPSA, EITESAL, MainOne Cable Company, Afenoid, Dotengee, DAPT, Computer Society of Kenya, DigiSphere, TechLaw, FinTrack Software,** and many others, demonstrating the broad spectrum of stakeholders engaged in Africa's digital ecosystem.

The Chairperson, **Ms. Ulandi Exner**, delivered her welcome address virtually from Hong Kong, emphasizing the unifying power of technology that enables global participation despite geographical distances. She highlighted Africa's vast potential for innovation, creativity, and youth-driven digital transformation. Ms. Exner positioned AfICTA as a collaborative ecosystem that promotes knowledge exchange, partnerships, and technological advancement. She drew attention to critical areas requiring focus, including digital infrastructure, innovation ecosystems, cybersecurity, financial inclusion, and sustainable development. She encouraged participants to engage in robust discussions and constructive debates, framing the summit as a platform to catalyze meaningful collaborations and outcomes.

The 13th Africa ICT Alliance Summit, themed "**Accelerating Africa's Digital Future: Innovation, Inclusion, and Economic Growth,**" commenced virtually with strong engagement from stakeholders across the continent. The two-day summit features a series of high-level sessions aimed at advancing Africa's digital agenda in a way that is inclusive, innovative, and aligned with the continent's economic aspirations. The theme reflects the collective vision for a prosperous, interconnected, and technology-empowered Africa, one where digital transformation becomes a catalyst for development across all sectors.

The summit brings together key players in Africa's digital ecosystem, including policymakers, private sector leaders, development partners, and technology experts. Through knowledge sharing, collaborative dialogue, and strategic partnerships, participants are exploring practical pathways to accelerate digital growth across the continent. A central focus is ensuring that the benefits of digital innovation reach every corner of Africa, leaving no one behind. Discussions also address persistent challenges such as limited digital literacy, disparities in infrastructure distribution, and insufficient connectivity in rural and underserved regions.

Ultimately, the summit serves as a vital platform for reflection and forward-thinking action. It acknowledges the remarkable progress already made in Africa’s digital transformation journey while creating space to chart the next steps toward a future where technology drives economic growth, deepens inclusion, strengthens innovation ecosystems, and supports sustainable development. This year’s theme underscores the imperative to move faster, collaborate more effectively, and adopt technologies that can unlock Africa’s full economic and social potential.

3.1.1 Summit Sub Themes

- Digital Infrastructure for a Connected Africa: Roles of Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation
- Digital Governance and Sovereignty in Africa: Prerequisite to fulfilling Digital Agenda
- Bridging the Divides: Promoting Inclusion Through Literacy and Lifelong Digital Learning
- Cybersecurity and Digital Trust: Safeguarding Africa's Digital Space through DNS Security and Data Protection
- Digital Governance & Policy Harmonization Towards a Robust Digital Africa
- Adopting Emerging Technologies and Addressing its Effect on Environment and Climate

3.2.0 Day 1

3.2.1 Keynote Session [Watch the Recording here](#)

Sponsored Keynote Session: Moderated by Ms. Ulandi Exner Chairperson of AfICTA



Mr. Brian Scarpelli – Senior Global Policy Counsel, ACT | The App Association, a proud sponsor of the summit

The first keynote speaker, Mr. Brian Scarpelli from The ACT, addressed the perspective of small business technology developers in Africa. He stressed the importance of inclusive policies that allow small tech enterprises to scale and compete on a global level. Scarpelli highlighted the need for balanced regulatory and infrastructural support, emphasizing the importance of data flow, interoperability, and cybersecurity frameworks to sustain digital growth. He also underscored the value of capacity building through public-private partnerships, enabling policymakers to understand emerging technologies and practical challenges. Overall, he advocated for a digital transformation strategy in Africa that prioritizes innovation, inclusion, and economic empowerment, particularly for small businesses and startups.

Mr. Pierre Danjinou Vice President, Stakeholder Engagement, ICANN-Africa



The second keynote speaker, Mr. Pierre Danjinou from ICANN, provided a comprehensive overview of the critical role ICANN plays in enabling a secure, stable, and interoperable internet, particularly within the African context. He began by explaining ICANN’s core mandate: coordinating unique internet identifiers, including domain names, IP addresses, and root servers, which are fundamental for the functioning of the global internet. Danjinou highlighted the significance of country code top-

level domains (ccTLDs), such as .ng for Nigeria, in driving national digital identity and presence. He emphasized that effective management and governance of these domains are crucial to ensuring trust, security, and the growth of local digital economies.

Pierre underscored the importance of a three-pillar framework that Africa must prioritize to accelerate its digital transformation. The first pillar, infrastructure accessibility, involves expanding broadband coverage, improving internet affordability, and ensuring reliable connectivity across urban and rural areas. He argued that without equitable access to high-quality internet, digital inclusion and economic empowerment remain unattainable for a significant portion of Africa's population.

The second pillar he highlighted was data management and analytics. Danjinou stressed that African countries must adopt policies and frameworks for data collection, storage, and utilization that protect privacy and support decision-making. He explained that leveraging data effectively enables governments, businesses, and civil society to design services and solutions that meet local needs while also fostering innovation in sectors such as fintech, e-health, and e-commerce.

The third pillar, talent development, was a major focus of his speech. He argued that building human capacity is central to sustaining Africa's digital ecosystem. This includes training skilled professionals in areas like cybersecurity, network administration, data science, and policy development. Danjinou also emphasized the role of ICANN in facilitating knowledge transfer, providing training programs, and supporting local initiatives that nurture digital talent and entrepreneurship.

Throughout his keynote, Pierre stressed the need for alignment between policy, technology, and skills. He pointed out that infrastructure investment alone is insufficient; countries must also create enabling environments where laws, regulatory frameworks, and digital literacy programs support innovation, inclusivity, and economic competitiveness. He highlighted ICANN's efforts to work closely with African stakeholders to ensure that internet governance reflects local realities while remaining consistent with global standards.

Finally, he urged African governments, private sector actors, and civil society to engage proactively in multistakeholder policy-making, emphasizing that collaboration is key to addressing emerging challenges like cybersecurity threats, data sovereignty concerns, and the digital divide. Danjinou concluded by noting that Africa's growth in the digital era will depend on its ability to integrate infrastructure, data, and talent into a cohesive strategy, and he reinforced ICANN's commitment to supporting these objectives through partnerships, capacity building, and technical guidance.



Dr. Jimson Olufuye, Principal Consultant, Kontemporary Konsulting Ltd

The third keynote speaker, Dr. Jimson Olufuye of Kontemporary Konsulting Ltd and AfICTA founder, built upon the themes introduced by previous speakers. He highlighted the correlation between internet penetration, cybersecurity maturity, and economic growth, citing research that a 10% increase in internet penetration could result in an 8.4% boost in GDP per capita. Dr. Jimson introduced the tripod cybersecurity maturity model, addressing security at the country, organizational, and company levels, marking a pioneering approach in the Global South. He also advocated for private-sector-led initiatives in ICT and emphasized the importance of talent development, infrastructure investment, and cross-sector collaboration. Dr. Jimson highlighted AfICTA's initiatives, such as the Africa Digital Corporation Accelerator, as mechanisms to enhance partnerships, mobilize resources, and advance Africa's

digital agenda in alignment with the African Continental Free Trade Area and Sustainable Development Goals.

Throughout the session, common themes emerged from the speakers’ interventions, including the emphasis on innovation, inclusion, infrastructure development, talent nurturing, policy alignment, collaboration, and economic impact. The summit reinforced that while Africa has made significant progress in digital transformation, challenges remain in connectivity, data sovereignty, and talent availability. Multi-stakeholder collaboration was emphasized as essential to accelerate growth, ensure inclusivity, and foster sustainable digital economies. AfICTA’s 13th summit was thus positioned as a vital platform for dialogue, innovation, and actionable outcomes that bridge the gaps between policy, technology, and industry while charting a path for Africa’s digital future.

3.2.2 First Panel Session

<p>Digital Infrastructure for a Connected Africa: Roles of Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation</p> <p>Watch the Recording here</p>	<p>Moderated by Mr. Paul Rowney, Former Deputy Chair, AfICTA</p> <p>Speakers: Ms. Amrita Choudhury, Director CCAOI & IGF MAG Member</p> <p>Mr. Kunle Jame Olorundare, President, ISOC Nigeria Chapter</p> <p>Mr. Hossam Elgamal, IGF MAG Member</p>
--	--

Introduction:

Moderator’s Introduction - Mr. Paul Rowney opened the first session by emphasizing the growing significance of digital infrastructure as Africa experiences unprecedented growth in connectivity. He highlighted the expansion of fiber networks, cross-border interconnections, the establishment of data centers, and the entry of global technology players into African markets. These developments, he noted, serve as catalysts for enhanced opportunities in education, health, commerce, and technological innovation.

While acknowledging the progress, he stressed the persistence of a deep digital divide, driven by high connectivity costs, inadequate infrastructure, and unreliable power supply. **Paul** underscored that infrastructure development must go beyond mere deployment to ensure affordability, inclusiveness, resilience, and sustainability. He emphasized that Africa’s digital future cannot be built by government alone, effective cooperation between government, private sector, civil society, academia, and global partners is essential. The session, therefore, aimed to identify barriers, spotlight successful multi-stakeholder models, and outline actionable steps toward bridging Africa’s digital divide.

Intervention 1 - Ms. Amrita Choudhury (Director, CCAOI; Member, IGF-MAG)

Ms. Amrita highlighted Africa’s diversity, geography, access to submarine cables, landlocked challenges, and uneven interconnections and noted similarities with the Asia-Pacific region. She emphasized that connectivity remains expensive, particularly last-mile access, and that global statistics show more than one-quarter of the world still unconnected, with the African proportion significantly higher.

She noted that digital infrastructure cannot be addressed in isolation from people, devices, demand, local language access, and affordability. **Amrita** stressed the importance of ensuring that developing countries do not remain technologically disadvantaged in the global information order. Global policy processes, WSIS+20, AI capacity building frameworks, digital inclusion strategies, must integrate African voices to ensure that global outcomes reflect regional realities.

The speaker also highlighted the need to strengthen capacity building at multiple levels, bureaucratic, entrepreneurial, technical, and among youth, as well as the need for trust-building through cybersecurity and safe internet practices. She gave examples such as India's reuse-device markets that make devices affordable, underscoring how device costs also determine digital inclusion.

Finally, she called for stronger multi-stakeholder synergy, transparent use of funds entering Africa, national and regional auditing of digital development progress, and use of academic research to inform evidence-based policymaking.

Intervention Mr. Kunle James Olorundare (President, ISOC Nigeria Chapter)

Mr. Kunle echoed earlier points on Africa's geographical uniqueness, noting that the differences between coastal and landlocked regions impact the cost and design of fiber deployment. He reflected on Africa's evolution from the era of dial-up internet to today's 5G-driven digital economy, highlighting that the demand for high-volume data requires robust, meaningful connectivity, not just basic access.

A key challenge he identified is Africa's heavy dependence on imported technology. He argued for strengthening local manufacturing of digital equipment, especially devices tailored to African conditions and local languages. He emphasized that relying solely on foreign-made devices limits sustainability and affordability.

Mr. Kunle stressed the need for harmonized African digital standards and regulations, similar to Europe's GDPR and unified standards frameworks. He proposed the development of an "African Data Protection and Privacy Framework" applicable across the continent. For him, Africa must move from fragmented regulations to regionally aligned standards that support cross-border digital services.

Additionally, he advocated for SMART policy-making, policies that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. He warned that policies taking five years to develop quickly become obsolete in the fast-moving digital environment. His intervention concluded with the call to translate global discussions (such as those at the IGF) into home-grown African policy actions.

Intervention 3 - Mr. Hossam Elgamal (IGF-MAG Member; Private Sector Leader)

Mr. Hossam began by referencing global processes such as WSIS+20 and the role that Africa must play in shaping the upcoming global digital governance frameworks. He situates Africa at a pivotal moment, moving from a continent of potential to one of acceleration, where digital infrastructure is the fuel driving economic transformation.

He argued strongly that multi-stakeholder cooperation is not optional, but a "non-negotiable architecture" for Africa's digital development. The complexity and cost of infrastructure

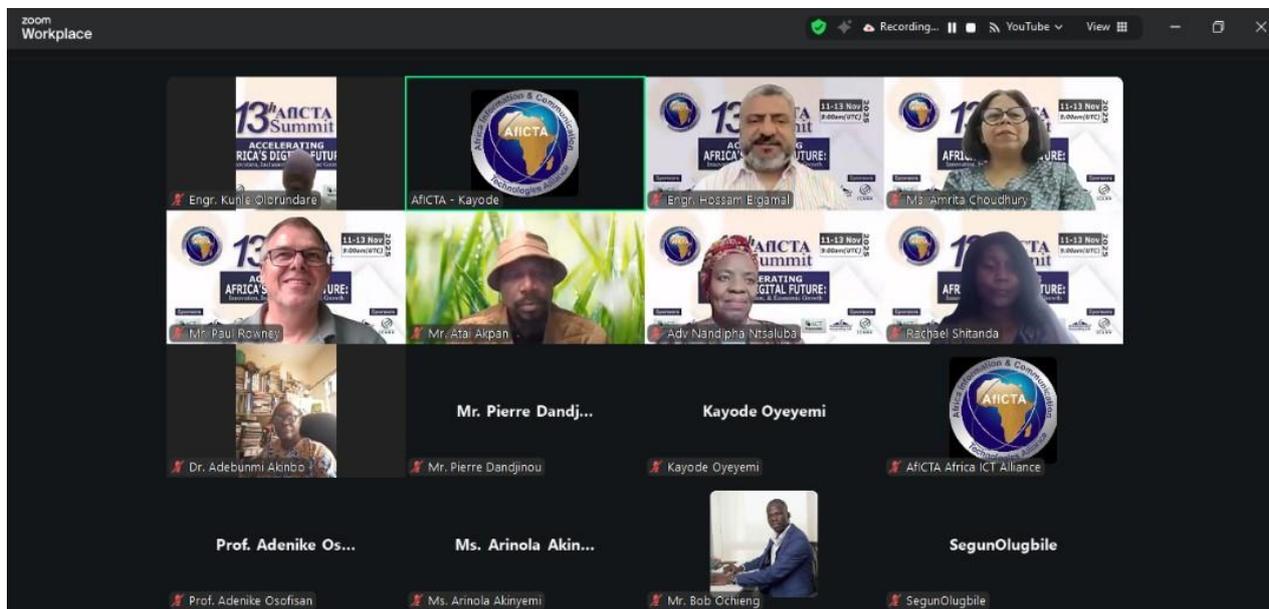
deployment, fiber, data centers, mobile networks, cloud, are too significant for any actor (government or private sector) to handle alone.

Hossam outlined clear roles for each stakeholder group:

- Government: Enabler and regulator, creates predictable policy and regulatory environments that de-risk investment.
- Private Sector: Provides capital, innovation, and execution speed for digital infrastructure rollout.
- Development Banks / Funding Institutions: Provide concessional finance, blended finance models, guarantees, and technical assistance.
- Civil Society & Academia: Ensure inclusivity, digital literacy, human-centric design, and grounding solutions in local realities.

He emphasized that effective cooperation requires shared vision, interoperability, sustainable financing models, and people-centered approaches. Multi-stakeholderism, he noted, must be a continuous process, not just an event or panel discussion.

In his closing remarks, the Moderator appreciated all speakers and participants for their valuable contributions throughout the session. He emphasized the importance of sustained collaboration, continuous stakeholder engagement, and collective responsibility in advancing Africa's digital agenda. He reiterated that conversations like this are essential for shaping inclusive policies, strengthening digital ecosystems, and ensuring that Africa is not left behind in the evolving global digital landscape. He thanked everyone for their active participation and officially brought the session to a close.



3.2.3 Second Panel Session

<p>Digital Governance and Sovereignty in Africa: Prerequisite to fulfilling Digital Agenda</p> <p>Watch the Recording here</p>	<p>Moderated by Ms. Rachael Shitanda, <i>Deputy Chair & VC East Africa, AfICTA</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Dr. Kossi AMESSINOU, Head, Private Sector Monitoring & Support Service, Ministry of Economy & Finances; Chair, ONG Women Be Free.Africa</p> <p>Mr. Olusegun Olugbile, CEO Data Analytics Privacy Technologies</p> <p>Adv Nandipha Ntsaluba, Legal Practice, South Africa</p>
--	--

The session was moderated by **Ms. Rachael Shitanda – Moderator / AfICTA Deputy Chair**

Ms. Shitanda opened the session by highlighting that while infrastructure development is progressing across Africa, it is not sufficient on its own to bridge the digital divide. She emphasized the importance of human capital development, particularly digital skills and literacy, to fully harness the benefits of technological advancement. She pointed out that economic, geographical, and gender disparities will persist unless inclusivity is integrated into digital strategies.

She called for greater collaboration between governments, private sector actors, and civil society organizations to implement practical, community-based interventions. She encouraged the audience to share and replicate successful initiatives from digitally progressive countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and Rwanda, reinforcing the role of partnerships in scaling digital empowerment across the continent.

Mr. Olusegun Olugbile, CEO Data Analytics Privacy Technologies

Mr. Segun Olugbile began his presentation by emphasizing the importance of digital governance and sovereignty in Africa, highlighting that nations must be able to control their own data, infrastructure, and digital policies. He noted that digital governance uses technology to manage public affairs, enhance transparency, and improve citizen services, but in Africa, unique political, social, and infrastructural challenges require tailored solutions. Local adaptation ensures that digital initiatives address specific regional needs, while digital sovereignty safeguards national interests by preventing external control, protecting local data, and ensuring policies align with economic and social priorities.

He observed that Africa’s digital economy has immense potential, projected to contribute over \$180 billion to the continent's GDP by 2025. AfICTA’s mandate focuses on promoting integration, inclusive economic growth, and local ownership of digital tools. This aligns with the African Union’s Digital Transformation Strategy (2020–2030), which emphasizes enabling policy environments, robust digital infrastructure, digital literacy, and comprehensive cybersecurity frameworks.

Highlighting the progress made across the continent, Olugbile cited significant achievements in infrastructure, policy, innovation, and digital identity. The rapid rollout of 4G and 5G networks, investment in submarine and terrestrial fiber optic cables, and expansion of Internet Exchange Points have improved connectivity and affordability. Over 30 countries now have data protection

laws, and many have established national cybersecurity strategies and CSIRTs. Africa is also leading globally in fintech innovation, supported by a proliferation of tech hubs, incubators, and venture capital funding targeting startups. National digital ID programs, such as Nigeria's NIN and Kenya's Huduma Namba, have created verifiable foundations for e-government services, improving efficiency and transparency.

Despite these gains, Olugbile acknowledged several critical bottlenecks. Regulatory fragmentation remains a challenge, with 22 countries lacking comprehensive data protection laws, which complicates cross-border digital trade. Infrastructure dependency on foreign data centers undermines sovereignty and exposes African data to external risks. Only 43% of Africans have reliable electricity, limiting the operational capacity of digital infrastructure. The skills gap is stark, with fewer than 10% of youth receiving formal ICT training. Enforcement gaps persist as many Data Protection Authorities lack resources and operational independence, undermining public trust. Large-scale programs like NIN face logistical and public resistance, slowing the adoption of secure e-services.

To address these gaps, Olugbile outlined several pathways for bridging the digital divide. He emphasized quantifying sovereign deficits in internet penetration, infrastructure, energy access, and skills to guide investments. He cited examples from Rwanda and Kenya, which demonstrate effective e-government leadership, and highlighted South Africa and Nigeria as models for robust data protection and regulatory enforcement. He argued that a trusted, sovereign digital environment encourages innovation, attracts foreign investment, and ensures economic value remains within local economies.

Adv Nandipha Ntsaluba, Legal Practice, South Africa

Adv Nandipha Ntsaluba stressed the importance of trust infrastructure and data transparency in Africa's digital ecosystem. She advocated for the creation of national certification authorities to monitor and regulate Internet Protocol (IP) usage and ensure governments have visibility over data flows. Adv Nandipha Ntsaluba highlighted the need for centralized data repositories that can be leveraged for research, student projects, and testing innovation within the continent. He emphasized that a coordinated approach to digital infrastructure and governance would strengthen the overall African digital ecosystem. Furthermore, Advocate. Adv Nandipha Ntsaluba called for the development of a unified African Qualifications Framework, where all qualifications and short programs are harmonized across the continent. Such a framework would support the creation of a single digital market for skills and innovation, enabling African professionals and innovators to move freely and have their qualifications recognized across borders. She concluded by noting that this approach would significantly reduce fragmentation and foster a more integrated digital economy in Africa.

Dr. Kossi AMESSINOU, Head, Private Sector Monitoring & Support Service, Ministry of Economy & Finances; Chair, ONG Women Be Free.Africa

Dr. Kossi highlighted the significant challenge African nations face in trying to comply with multiple, differing regulations across countries, which not only creates conflicting scenarios but also makes compliance costly and cumbersome. He noted that while African countries are striving to meet national requirements, they are simultaneously confronted with the need to satisfy regulations in other African nations, creating a complex and expensive environment for businesses and institutions. Dr. Kossi stressed the importance of operationalizing the African Union's Malabo Convention on Cybersecurity and Data Protection, pointing out that it has been formally notified but requires practical implementation strategies. He emphasized that

harmonizing regulations across the continent, similar to the GDPR in the European Union would help eliminate the duplication of effort and support the vision of an African Continental Free Trade Area. Without such harmonization, implementing country-specific regulations in multiple nations would undermine regional trade and investment goals. Dr. Kossi concluded by encouraging collaboration across African nations and sectors, sharing information and best practices, and working together to strengthen digital governance frameworks. He also offered to make his presentation available to all participants for further review.

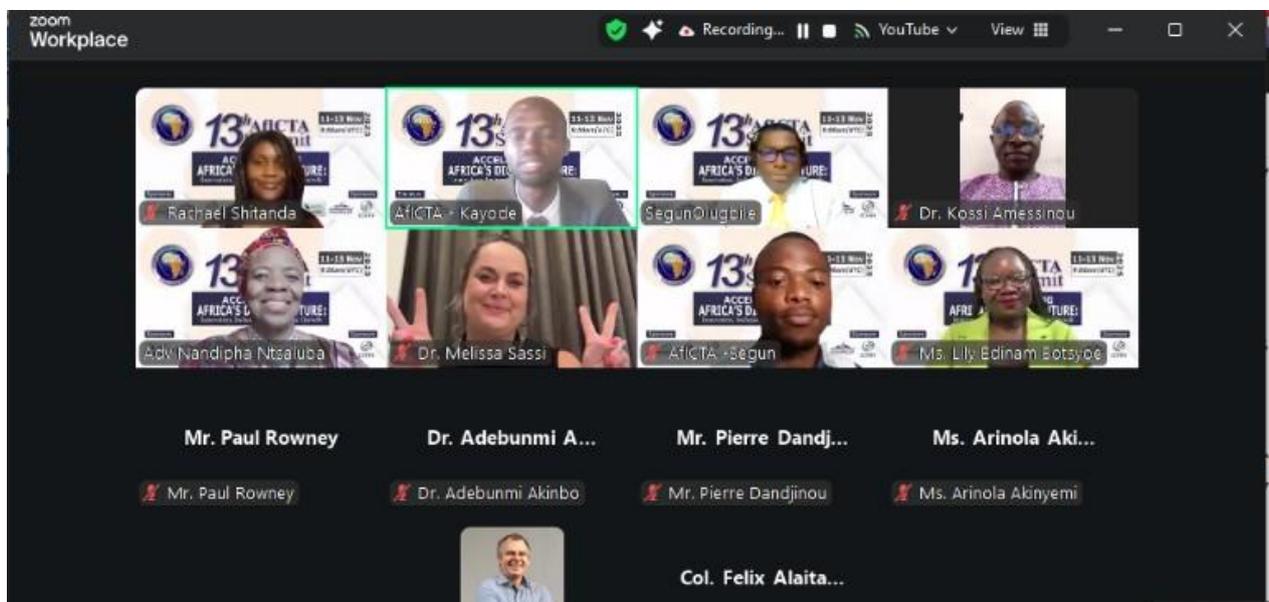
Closing Remarks - Ms. Rachael Shitanda

As we conclude today's session on Digital Governance and Sovereignty in Africa, we note that harmonizing regulations across countries remains a major challenge. The Malabo Convention offers a framework for African-wide cybersecurity and data protection, but operationalizing it with consistent guidelines is critical to avoid fragmented systems and high costs.

Collaboration between academia, government, private sector, and civil society is essential to close digital gaps, strengthen cybersecurity capacity, and enhance policy development. Harmonizing certifications, creating a unified African qualifications framework, and empowering Africa through digital sovereignty are key steps toward building a cohesive digital market.

Key takeaways include:

- Harmonize governance frameworks across Africa.
- Strengthen institutional capacity for effective enforcement.
- Promote cross-sector collaboration for sustainable digital development.
- Ensure ownership of data and alignment of policies with African priorities.



3.2.4 Third Panel Session

<p>Bridging the Divides: Promoting Inclusion Through Literacy and Lifelong Digital Learning</p> <p>Watch the Recording here</p>	<p>Moderated</p> <p>Ms. Lily Edinam Botsyoe, Ph.D. Candidate in Information Technology and a UC Presidential Fellow</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Col. Felix Alaita (rtd). Cofounder Shecode.ai</p> <p>Dr. Melissa Sassi, Global Head IBM Hyper Protect Accelerator</p>
---	--

Introduction

Ms. Lily Edinam Botsyoe, Ph.D. Candidate in Information Technology and a UC Presidential Fellow

The moderator opened the session by framing critical questions around AI, human intervention, and digital literacy. They asked whether AI strengthens humans while weakening itself, emphasizing the need for critical thinking and human oversight. The moderator highlighted the challenges of information asymmetry in AI and encouraged participants to adopt a phased learning approach, “crawl, walk, run, fly” to build knowledge and capacity without overwhelming learners. They underscored the importance of literacy, critical thinking, and understanding the tools being used to navigate digital technologies responsibly.

The moderator guided the discussion towards sustainability and scalability of digital literacy initiatives in Africa, emphasizing the need for local engagement, mentorship, and community participation. They also raised questions from the audience, including how storytelling could be used to educate African children about AI and how to close the digital usage gap. Their approach kept the discussion interactive and grounded in practical realities, focusing on actionable steps and the human dimension of technology.

Dr. Melissa Sassi, Global Head IBM Hyper Protect Accelerator

Dr. Sassi highlighted that AI is not autonomous and requires human intervention for meaningful outcomes. He shared a practical example from Cape Verde, demonstrating how understanding data sources and representation is critical to avoid bias. He emphasized that AI reflects the perspectives and limitations of the datasets it is trained on and warned of potential echo chambers if local voices are not adequately represented.

She stressed the importance of critical thinking, media literacy, and ethical use of AI to prevent misinformation. Dr. Sassi advocated for inclusive digital literacy initiatives, especially targeting rural and local communities, to counteract brain drain and preserve cultural knowledge. He recommended hands-on engagement, including hackathons and volunteerism, as effective means for young people to gain practical skills and contribute to their communities. Finally, she highlighted storytelling as a tool to shape African narratives, giving children agency in understanding and engaging with AI.

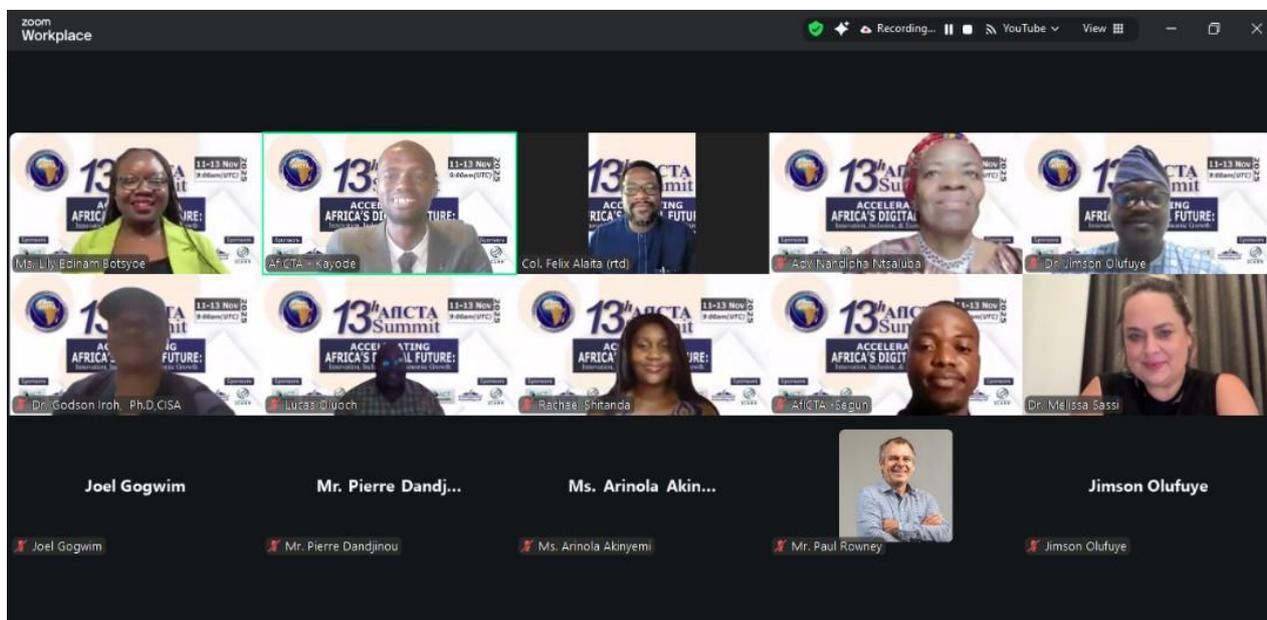
Col. Felix Alaita (rtd). Cofounder Shecode.ai

Felix Alaita noted that AI strengthens humans by augmenting knowledge capacity, providing rapid access to global information. They emphasized that while AI is currently complementary, it may evolve toward greater autonomy, potentially reducing human intervention in the future. Felix highlighted the ethical considerations necessary for AI deployment and the importance of defining clear boundaries to prevent harm.

For sustainability, Felix proposed a “hub-and-spoke” model that integrates local communities, private sector, and public sector actors to ensure scalable digital literacy initiatives. They stressed the role of visible outcomes in creating sustainable programs and suggested leveraging AI to build African-centered narratives for children. By shaping local stories, African youth can develop cultural pride and global competitiveness, similar to how Afrobeats has gained international recognition.

Felix emphasized that AI currently complements human capacity, enhancing learning and decision-making. They discussed the challenges of misinformation in AI, highlighting that personal responsibility, critical thinking, and awareness of AI limitations are essential. Felix noted that AI learns from human interaction, creating both opportunities and risks, and stressed the ethical and regulatory considerations needed to guide its use.

Regarding sustainability and scalability, Felix underscored the importance of local community engagement, storytelling, and volunteerism. They argued that digital literacy programs should be practical, accessible, and tied to real outcomes that participants can observe and replicate. Felix also highlighted the potential of AI literacy to empower individuals to protect their communities and participate meaningfully in digital democracy.



3.2.5 Fourth Panel Session

<p>Cybersecurity and Digital Trust: Safeguarding Africa's Digital Space through DNS Security and Data Protection</p> <p>Watch the Recording here</p>	<p>Moderated by Mr. Opeyemi Onifade, CEO, Afenoid Enterprise Nigeria Ltd & AfICTA Treasurer</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Mr. Wisdom Donkor, Executive Director Africa Open Data and Internet Research Foundation (AODIRF) & the Africa Community Internet Program</p> <p>Dr. Akinbo Adebunmi, CEO of DNS Africa Media and Communications.</p> <p>Mr. Peter Akinremi, CEO Compssoftnet Technologies Ltd</p>
--	---

Introduction

The second day of the 13th AfICTA Summit featured a rich and dynamic panel session on “**Cybersecurity and Digital Trust: Safeguarding Africa's Digital Space through DNS Security and Data Protection.**” The session was moderated by **Mr. Opeyemi Onifade** and featured distinguished experts, including Mr. Wisdom Donko, Dr. Adebunmi Adeola Akinbo and Mr. Akinremi Taiwo-Peter. The panelists provided valuable insights into the challenges facing Africa’s digital space and proposed actionable strategies for enhancing cybersecurity, promoting digital trust, and protecting critical data. Discussions highlighted the importance of continental interconnection, local internet infrastructure, cyber hygiene education, harmonized regulatory frameworks, and strategic capacity building to ensure a secure, resilient, and inclusive digital ecosystem across Africa.

Moderator’s Opening Remarks

The moderator, Mr. Opeyemi Onifade, CEO Afenoid Enterprise & AfICTA Treasurer opened the session by welcoming participants and introducing the session focus, enhancing cybersecurity and digital trust across Africa through stronger DNS security and improved data protection frameworks. He highlighted the need for collaborative governance models to strengthen resilience within Africa’s evolving digital ecosystem. He then introduced the panelists: Dr. Akinbo Adewumi (DNS Africa Media & Communications) and Mr. Wisdom Donko (Executive Director, Africa Open Data & Internet Research Foundation; Ghana Domain Name Registry). Other panelists could not join.

Intervention by **Dr. Akinbo Adewumi** - Dr. Adewumi discussed the concept of digital trust, describing it as the confidence users have that digital systems will protect their personal data while functioning reliably, securely, and transparently. He emphasized that Africa lacks sufficient capacity in cybersecurity and DNS-related expertise, noting that the Domain Name System remains vulnerable to cybercriminal manipulation. According to him, digital trust rests on key pillars such as security, privacy, reliability, and transparency, but many African countries still struggle with these fundamentals due to weak legislation and limited policy enforcement. He further noted that inconsistencies in privacy protections across the continent hinder user trust. Highlighting regional disparities, he explained that although 36 African countries have enacted data protection laws, implementation remains weak. Dr. Adewumi recommended stronger legislation, cross-border harmonization, Multi-Jurisdictional compliance, and the adoption of global best practices without reinventing the wheel. He stressed the need for widespread

deployment of DNSSEC, stronger accountability frameworks, the adoption of the Malabo Convention, and greater public awareness to rebuild trust.

Intervention by Mr. Wisdom Donko - Mr. Donko framed the concept of Africa's digital space as a rapidly expanding but still fragile ecosystem lacking sufficient capacity, infrastructure, and security. He noted that most African data still resides outside the continent, exposing countries to sovereignty risks. He emphasized that without digital trust, citizens will not transact online, businesses will not invest, and governments will fail to deliver digital services effectively. Using Ghana as a case study, he outlined ongoing initiatives at the Ghana Domain Name Registry aimed at strengthening DNS infrastructure. These include mandatory DNSSEC deployment for all .gh domains, implementation of a zero-trust model for domain registrants, stricter Know-Your-Customer (KYC) verification processes to prevent anonymous domain misuse, and cross-border DNS security collaboration. He also highlighted the importance of aligning national initiatives with continental frameworks such as the Malabo Convention. Mr. Donko stressed the urgency of building capacity, protecting data under African legal jurisdictions, and strengthening digital public infrastructure. Finally, he cautioned against the growing power of cybersecurity authorities, noting the need to clearly define the limits of their mandates to prevent political misuse or arbitrary domain takedowns.

Mr. Donko Wisdom concluded his presentation by emphasizing the need to retain data within national borders through strategic infrastructure. He highlighted the importance of forming a continental interconnection fabric to support intra-African digital activity. At the national level, he suggested developing a robust internet ecosystem to promote local digital assets. Additionally, he discussed the use of zero-rating or government-governed platforms via local internet exchange points to ensure that government services are accessible to all citizens. Mr. Donko noted that, combined with a Pan-African internet exchange, possibly coordinated through the African Union, these measures would enable Africa to conduct business locally while retaining the majority of its data within the continent.

Intervention by **Dr. Adebumi Akinbo** - Dr. Akinbo used his final remarks to stress the value of early cybersecurity education. He advocated for culturally relevant awareness campaigns targeting young people and integrating basic cyber hygiene into school curricula. By starting awareness efforts from an early age, he argued, the next generation would be better prepared to navigate complex cybersecurity challenges and engage responsibly with emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. Dr. Akinbo emphasized that combining government support with private sector initiatives would be critical in grooming the next generation of cybersecurity-aware citizens.

Intervention by **Mr. Akinremi Taiwo-Peter** - Mr. Taiwo-Peter concluded the session by focusing on strategic approaches to strengthening Africa's cyberspace. He highlighted the need for strategic investment, harmonized regulatory frameworks, and capacity building, all aligned with a strong sense of African identity and values. His remarks emphasized that a unified and locally driven strategy would help Africa secure its digital ecosystem while fostering growth, innovation, and self-determination in cyberspace.

attendees to review the chat box for additional rich comments and insights shared throughout the session.

Dr. Wunmi Intervention- Policy Frameworks & Regional Challenges

Wunmi began by reflecting on their experience with the African Union on health data governance and broader digital frameworks. They noted that many African policies are heavily dependent on development aid, which can undermine sovereignty and local ownership. Wunmi compared African approaches to other regions: the EU quickly adopts frameworks and white papers, while the US relies on a market-driven approach and historically had limited formal internet governance structures.

They highlighted the challenge of conflicting national priorities within African countries, noting that digital portfolios often shift between ministries such as communications, transport, and ICT, creating inconsistency. Wunmi cited Rwanda and Nigeria as examples of countries making progress, with Nigeria now recognizing digital as a strategic economic asset.

Wunmi also addressed the difficulty of harmonizing digital policies across countries with varying infrastructure levels. They explained that countries with well-established digital systems, like Nigeria, face challenges when coordinating with countries where basic digital services are still limited. Wunmi concluded by stressing that while governance and regulation are universally desired, capacity varies, and not all countries can implement digital policies effectively.

Ms. Nnnena Intervention- Youth & Inclusive Governance

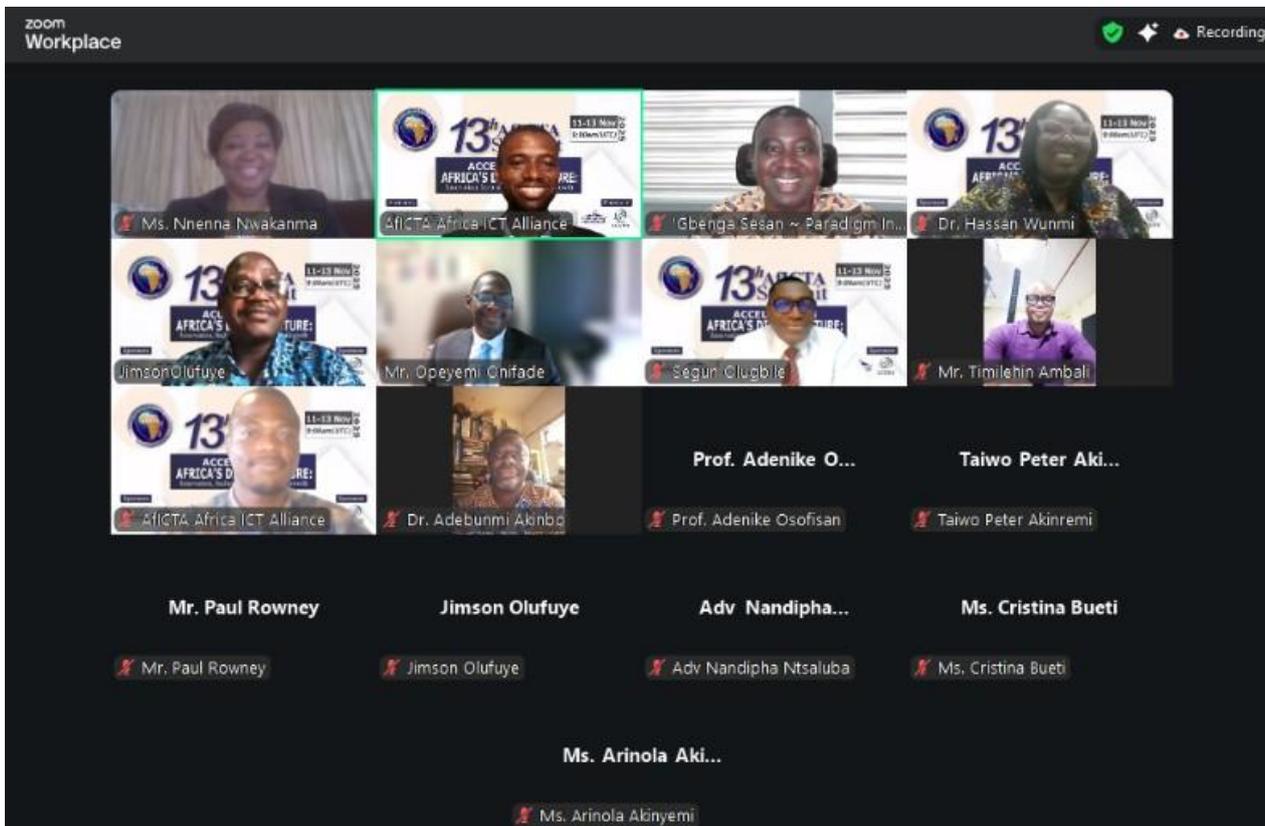
Nnnena focused on the importance of youth inclusion in policy-making. They shared experiences of being excluded from formal discussions, highlighting societal and institutional barriers that prevent young professionals from contributing meaningfully. Nnnena emphasized that a society's progress is measured by how it treats its weakest members, including youth and marginalized groups.

They argued that barriers often prevent young people from participating in governance, innovation, and economic development. Nnnena criticized government agencies for claiming credit for achievements driven by civil society or youth innovators, calling for greater transparency and accountability. They concluded that Africa is not yet ready for policy harmonization due to disparities in governance, infrastructure, and implementation capacity.

Gbenga Sesan Intervention- Policy Implementation & Practical Insights

Gbenga highlighted practical challenges in implementing digital policies across Africa. They shared experiences of restricted access to policy discussions and inconsistencies in digital infrastructure, where some countries have advanced cashless systems while others face basic banking challenges.

They stressed the need for enabling environments where youth, women, and civil society can contribute meaningfully to digital governance. Gbenga called on governments, private sector actors, and civil society to ensure that future generations do not face the same obstacles as current pioneers. They echoed the sentiment that continental policy harmonization is premature in many contexts, urging a cautious approach based on each country's readiness.



3.2.7 Sixth Panel Session

<p>Adopting Emerging Technologies and Addressing its Effect on Environment and Climate</p> <p>Watch Recording here</p>	<p>Moderated by: Ms. Christiana Bueti, Counsellor on Metaverse & Smart Cities International Telecommunication Union, ITU</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Dr. Hoda Nofal, International Business Development Expert Climate Change civil society Representative Cairo, Egypt.</p> <p>Mr. Atai Albert Akpan, Chief Operating Officer/Partner Transventel LLC, State of Georgia, USA</p> <p>Prof. Adenike Osofisan, Fmr. President, Computer Professional Registration Council of Nigeria</p>
--	--

Moderator’s Opening Remarks, **Ms. Christiana Bueti** of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) set the tone for the session by underscoring the increasing importance of emerging technologies in addressing climate change and environmental sustainability. She emphasized that ITU, as the UN agency responsible for digital technologies, works extensively with governments and industries to ensure that the adoption of these technologies aligns with global sustainability objectives. She noted that technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), and digital twins offer transformative opportunities for environmental monitoring, smart city management, and energy efficiency. However, she also cautioned that these technologies come with new environmental pressures, including rising energy demands, e-waste generation, and the environmental impacts associated with data centers and device lifecycles. Her remarks framed the session as a necessary dialogue on balancing innovation with responsible, sustainable deployment.

Intervention by **Dr. Hoda**, Climate-Smart Construction and Egypt's Smart City Innovations

Dr. Hoda presented a detailed account of Egypt's efforts in climate-smart construction as part of the country's broader strategy to meet global commitments under the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 13 on Climate Action. Drawing from her experiences as a civil society representative at COP27 in Egypt and COP28 in the United Arab Emirates, she explained the urgency of transitioning to low-carbon development pathways. She described how Egypt is leveraging its vast solar resources and modern construction technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings, which currently account for nearly 40% of global annual carbon emissions.

She explained Egypt's innovative use of advanced facade and cladding systems in smart city projects such as the New Administrative Capital. These multi-layered systems, which incorporate insulation materials, structural support frameworks, ventilated air gaps, and external cladding surfaces such as marble, glass, or solar photovoltaic panels, are designed to reduce heat gain and enhance energy efficiency. According to her, these designs lower the workload on cooling systems by up to 30-40% in hot-climate environments. She noted that when these architectural features are integrated with digital building management systems, they enable real-time monitoring and optimized energy consumption, transforming buildings from passive structures into active components of a smart, sustainable urban ecosystem. She demonstrated similar innovations from other countries, including an active-energy solar cladding design from Tajikistan, and concluded by inviting interested participants to reach out for further technical insights.

Intervention by Mr. Atai Akpan, Technology as a Driver of Climate Solutions and SDG Acceleration

Mr. Atai Akpan spoke extensively on the role of emerging technologies in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in the context of climate action. He explained that the global push toward sustainable development requires technological innovation across all sectors, and that digital transformation is becoming a central enabler of climate resilience, transparency, and green economic growth. He emphasized that technologies such as artificial intelligence, smart grids, digital finance solutions, blockchain, and renewable energy systems are reshaping how societies respond to environmental challenges.

He noted that digital solutions enable governments and industries to improve carbon tracking and verification, strengthen disaster prediction systems, enhance resource efficiency, and expand access to clean energy. **Mr. Akpan** also highlighted innovations in sustainable construction materials, waste-to-energy technologies, maritime environmental monitoring, and hydrogen energy systems as examples of how technology is driving climate mitigation and adaptation. He stressed that the integration of emerging technologies into national development frameworks improves investment transparency, supports environmental, social, and governance (ESG) compliance, and enhances energy security. Concluding his remarks, he underscored the need for stronger public-private partnerships, investment in digital infrastructure, and increased capacity-building for youth and professionals working in sustainability and environmental technology.

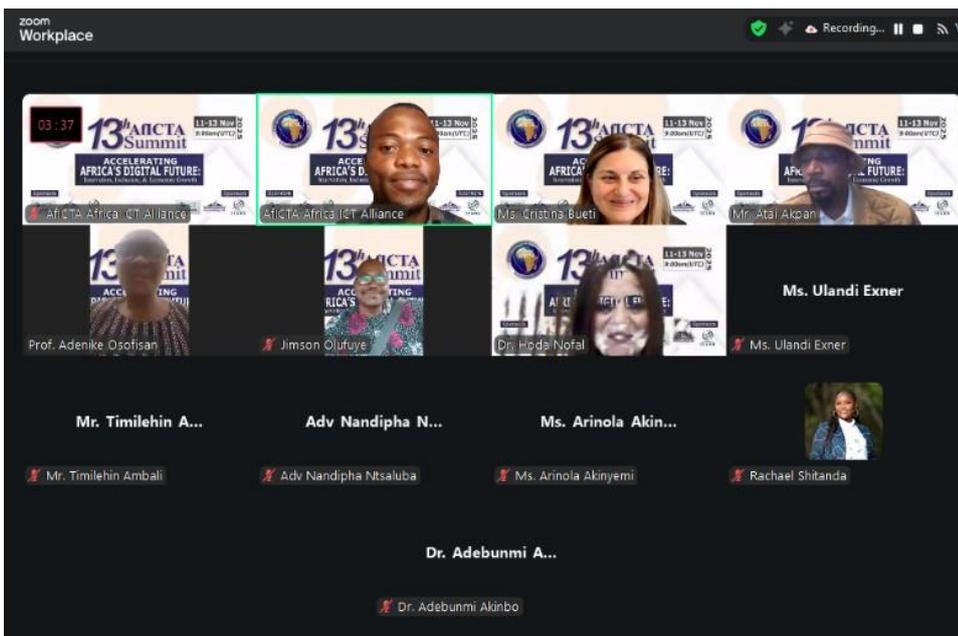
Intervention by Professor Adenike Osofisan, The Dual Impact of Emerging Technologies on Climate Action

Professor Osofisan examined what she described as the “**paradox**” of emerging technologies highlighting both their benefits and their unintended negative consequences on the environment

and climate. She acknowledged that technologies such as AI, IoT, renewable energy systems, and satellite-based monitoring have supported progress in agriculture, transportation, energy management, and disaster forecasting across Africa. She cited practical examples including AI-enabled precision farming in Kenya, solar microgrids improving rural electrification in South Africa, and Nigerian energy startups using AI to predict power demand and optimize solar-hybrid systems. According to her, these innovations have contributed to improved productivity, reduced emissions, and enhanced resilience.

However, **Professor Osofisan** cautioned that the adoption of such technologies must be managed carefully, as they also produce significant environmental burdens. She drew attention to the high energy consumption of data centers, the increasing volume of electronic waste generated from short-lifecycle digital devices, and the large quantities of water required for cooling advanced computing systems. She also highlighted ethical issues such as biased algorithms, privacy concerns, and AI hallucinations that can distort decision-making. She stressed that while Africa contributes less than 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions, the continent remains highly vulnerable to climate impacts, making it essential for African nations to adopt sustainable, renewable-powered digital infrastructure. Her intervention concluded with a call for policy reforms, stronger academic engagement, and a shift toward a repair-and-reuse culture to minimize technology-related environmental externalities.

In her closing remarks, **Ms. Cristiana Bueti** thanked all the speakers for their insightful contributions and highlighted the importance of continuing cross-sector collaboration to ensure that technological advancements support not undermine, environmental sustainability. She stressed that emerging technologies must be deployed in a way that prioritizes human well-being, reduces ecological harm, and accelerates climate action goals. She encouraged policymakers, industry leaders, researchers, and civil society representatives to maintain momentum by integrating the session's insights into national digital strategies, smart city planning, climate adaptation efforts, and educational programs. She concluded by reaffirming ITU's commitment to supporting countries in developing standards, guidance, and partnerships that promote a sustainable digital future.



3.3.0 Summit & Nominating Committee

S/N	Names	AfICTA Designation
1.	Ms. Ulandi Exner	Chair, Summit Committee, Nominating Committee & AfICTA Chair, Vice Chair Southern Africa
2.	Ms. Rachael Shitanda	Deputy Chair, AfICTA & Member of the NomCom
3.	Ms. Arinola Akinyemi	Member
4.	Mr. Bonny Mekwunye	Member, Nominating Committee
5.	Assem Wahby	Member
5.	Mr. Brian Scarpelli	Member
	Mr. Inye Kemabonta	Member
	Mr. Rimmon Kisten	Member
6	Mr. Rex Abitogun	Member
	Mr. Thabo Mashegoane	Member
4.	Omolosho Segun	Programme Officer
5.	Oyeyemi Kayode	Snr. Programme Officer

3.4.0 Africa ICT Award Winners

The outcome of the nomination and election for the 2025 Africa ICT Awards as coordinated by the Nominating Committee of AfICTA is shown below:

S/N	Award Category	Award Winner 2025
1.	Africa ICT Champion Award	1. Mr. Lucas Oluoch , Principal ICT Officer at Kenya Wildlife Service. 2. Dr. Robinson Tombari Sibe , CEO Digital Footprints Nigeria Ltd & AfICTA Board Member 3. Mr. Bimbo Abioye , President ISPON, CEO Fintrak Software & AfICTA Board Member 4. Ms. Arinola Akinyemi , CEO DigiSphere Nigeria Ltd, AfICTA West Africa Vice Chair 5. Ms. Rachael Shitanda , AfICTA Deputy Chair & Vice Chair East Africa
2.	Africa ICT Personality Award	6. Mr. Chris Uwaje , Former President of Institute of Software Practitioners of Nigeria (ISPON) 7. Dr. Adebunmi Akinbo , Founder, DNS Africa Media and Communications.
3.	Africa CIO Award	8. Ms. Jaqueline Madara Dondo , Visionary ICT leader, cybersecurity expert, AI enthusiast, and mentor, as Head of ICT at Machakos University.
4.	Africa ICT Innovation Award	9. Mr. Godwin Okwara , Technical/IT Engineer, Texas, United States.
5.	Africa Community Development Award	10. Mr Hanniel Hamisu Jafaru , Executive Director, HTC Academy & Cybersecurity & AI Governance Expert

CHAPTER 4

4.1 Recommendations

Session 1: Digital Infrastructure for a Connected Africa

A connected Africa requires a shift toward **meaningful and affordable connectivity**, emphasizing quality, reliability, and user relevance rather than mere access. This includes investing in last-mile infrastructure through innovative models such as community networks and strengthening regional interconnections and Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) to reduce latency and cost. To create a unified ecosystem, **regional harmonization of standards and policies** is essential particularly through continent-wide data protection frameworks and alignment of national regulations with regional digital transformation goals.

Strengthened **multi-stakeholder cooperation** must underpin all efforts, ensuring that governments, private sector actors, civil society, academia, and development partners work collaboratively in shaping national, regional, and global policy processes. This cooperation should leverage global platforms such as the IGF and WSIS+20 to amplify African realities and perspectives. Simultaneously, countries must invest in **local manufacturing and digital value chains**, supporting device assembly, local content creation, and innovation ecosystems that generate African IP and culturally relevant solutions.

Capacity building is another core pillar, including equipping youth, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and communities with emerging technology skills, enhancing cybersecurity awareness, and strengthening institutions that provide data-driven insights for decision-making. To support sustainable development, African countries need **SMART digital policies** that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound moving away from long, rigid policy cycles toward adaptive and regularly reviewed frameworks.

Finally, transparency and accountability in **digital development funds** is crucial. Clear monitoring of funding inflows, outcomes, and project performance supported by civil society oversight ensures that initiatives achieve intended goals. Open reporting mechanisms and independent evaluations will help build trust, encourage investment, and improve the impact of digital transformation efforts across the continent.

Session 2: Digital Governance and Sovereignty in Africa

Africa's digital sovereignty requires **strong, credible, and independent regulatory institutions** capable of transparent enforcement and agile policymaking. Policymakers should accelerate harmonization of legal frameworks across the region, including implementing model African Data Protection laws similar to the AU cybersecurity strategy to support secure cross-border data flows and enhance digital trade under the AfCFTA. This harmonization must be complemented by frameworks that encourage local data hosting, sovereign infrastructure, and co-ownership models that keep economic value within the continent.

Investing in **digital literacy and large-scale capacity building** is essential for strengthening Africa's ability to govern its digital space. This includes continental initiatives that equip youth, MSMEs, and startups with industry-aligned skills, enabling them to contribute to digital innovation and policy development. Public-private partnerships will be central to scaling these investments, bringing governments, industry players, and academia together to co-create solutions that drive sustainable digital growth and strengthen Africa's competitiveness.

To prioritize investments and track progress, African nations should adopt a **data-driven approach to quantifying the digital sovereign deficit**, assessing gaps in connectivity, infrastructure, energy, and human capital. Drawing on best practices from countries like Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, and Nigeria can accelerate regulatory maturity, improve e-government services, and enhance data protection environments across the region.

Ultimately, strengthening digital sovereignty will help Africa build **trusted digital ecosystems** where consumers are protected, innovators can thrive, and foreign investment is encouraged. Through robust governance, harmonized standards, and strong institutional leadership, Africa can build a secure digital future that aligns with regional development goals and global digital dynamics.

Session 3: Bridging Divides Through Literacy and Lifelong Digital Learning

To bridge Africa's digital divides, governments and institutions must promote **human-centered AI** that enhances human capacity rather than replaces it. This requires maintaining human oversight in AI applications, addressing dataset biases, and ensuring that AI systems reflect the diversity of African cultures, languages, and social contexts. Building inclusive AI ecosystems will contribute to ethical, trusted, and people-focused digital transformation.

Digital inclusion also depends on **sustainable and scalable digital literacy initiatives**, designed to produce visible outcomes and build strong local talent pipelines. Mentorship programs, volunteer-driven digital education, and community learning hubs can extend learning opportunities to rural and underserved populations. Lifelong learning models must prioritize practical, context-based skills that empower citizens to participate in an increasingly digital economy.

These efforts should be anchored in continent-wide strategies that integrate both formal and informal digital learning pathways. Collaboration among governments, tech companies, educational institutions, and civil society organizations will help scale training programs and ensure equal access to digital opportunities. By embedding digital literacy within national education systems and community training networks, Africa can build resilient, future-ready citizens capable of navigating and shaping the digital age.

Ultimately, the focus on human-centered AI, inclusive education, and lifelong learning will reinforce Africa's broader digital transformation agenda ensuring that individuals of all backgrounds benefit from new technologies, access opportunities equally, and contribute to a more innovative and inclusive digital society.

Session 4: Cybersecurity and Digital Trust

Strengthening Africa's digital resilience requires a decisive push toward **DNS security, data protection, and zero-trust systems** that safeguard users and institutions. Countries are encouraged to accelerate DNS-SEC deployment across all ccTLDs, enforce verified domain ownership, and eliminate anonymous registrations to reduce cybercrime risks. These measures must be accompanied by strong, harmonized data protection laws built upon the Malabo Convention, ensuring that cross-border compliance supports digital trade and continental data sovereignty.

Building trust in Africa's digital space demands **significant investment in cybersecurity infrastructure and capacity development**. This includes establishing national and regional DNS academies, cybersecurity training hubs, and professional certification programs to grow local expertise and reduce dependence on foreign skills. Such capacity-building efforts should be supported by regulatory harmonization frameworks that reflect African values, identity, and development priorities while providing clear guidelines for ethical AI use, digital operations, and data handling.

Effective cybersecurity also requires **multi-stakeholder collaboration** among regulators, registries, ISPs, civil society, and policymakers. Partnerships that focus on cross-border threat intelligence sharing, DNS abuse mitigation, and coordinated incident response will help secure Africa's expanding digital ecosystem. At the same time, legal safeguards must prevent the abuse of cybersecurity mandates, ensuring authorities cannot arbitrarily shut down domains without due process.

To sustain progress, the session recommends forming an **African Alliance for DNS Security and Data Protection**, launching continental roadmaps for DNSSEC implementation, and engaging policymakers to align national strategies with international standards. Awareness campaigns, legal reforms, stakeholder outreach, and transparent enforcement will embed digital trust as a foundational component of Africa's digital transformation.

Session 5: Digital Governance & Policy Harmonization

A robust digital Africa depends on **inclusive governance and harmonized policies** that empower all regions to participate fully in the digital economy. Session 5 emphasized expanding outreach to underserved and underrepresented regions to ensure widespread awareness of gTLD opportunities, ICANN Business Constituency (BC) membership benefits, and broader digital governance processes. Tailored capacity-building programs are essential for helping African startups, MSMEs, and innovators navigate ICANN procedures, technical standards, and policy requirements.

The session underscored the importance of **mentorship and knowledge transfer**, recommending structured programs that pair experienced ICANN community members with new African participants. Such mentorship would not only increase successful domain applications but also strengthen Africa's influence in global policy development. By equipping emerging entrepreneurs and technical communities with practical guidance, Africa can more effectively shape DNS policies and digital governance conversations.

Localizing digital governance frameworks remains a key priority. This includes advocating for national and regional policies that address Africa-specific challenges such as DNS abuse, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, and infrastructure gaps. Context-driven regulatory solutions will help countries implement global standards while ensuring relevance to local realities, industry capabilities, and societal needs.

Continuous engagement is crucial for sustaining Africa's digital governance momentum. Regular webinars, stakeholder dialogues, updates on ICANN developments, and collaborative consultations will ensure the African business community remains informed, empowered, and actively involved in shaping the continent's digital future.

Session 6: Emerging Technologies, Environment & Climate

Session 6 highlighted the need for **responsible and sustainable adoption of emerging technologies** that align with Africa's climate goals and environmental priorities. Participants emphasized integrating sustainability principles into national ICT policies, smart city initiatives, and innovation strategies to ensure that technological deployment contributes to long-term ecological resilience. This includes promoting renewable energy-powered digital infrastructure, especially green data centers that reduce the carbon footprint of Africa's digital expansion.

The session called for widespread adoption of **climate-smart technology solutions**, including AI-enabled environmental monitoring tools, smart agriculture systems, disaster prediction platforms, and waste-to-energy technologies. These innovations offer practical pathways for countries to adapt to climate change, improve food security, and enhance environmental stewardship. At the same time, construction and urban development sectors should embrace energy-efficient designs, solar-enabled façades, and climate-resilient materials to build greener African cities.

Human capital remains central to digital sustainability. Building a workforce skilled in green technologies, ESG standards, circular economy principles, and responsible innovation will enable African countries to fully harness climate-tech opportunities. Training programs targeting youth, professionals, policymakers, and industry leaders will help embed sustainability across sectors, strengthening Africa's readiness for a green digital future.

The session also emphasized the importance of **multi-stakeholder collaboration and ethical governance**. Governments, private sector players, academia, civil society, and international organizations must work together to mobilize climate finance, scale digital sustainability projects, and implement robust e-waste management frameworks. Ethical technology use supported by AI governance standards, transparency, and safeguards against bias and misinformation will ensure emerging technologies drive progress without compromising security, trust, or environmental integrity.

End of document