

Report
of
The 12th AfICTA (Virtual) Summit

On

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by

AfICTA Secretariat

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Summit Sponsored By



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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 2024

The 12th AfICTA Summit was held virtually from Wednesday 4-5 December, 2024 and themed “**Digital Agenda 2030: Shaping Africa’s Future Through Innovative Technology & Collaboration**”.

2.1 Overview

The rapid pace of digital transformation offers Africa an unprecedented opportunity to leapfrog traditional development hurdles and accelerate socio-economic growth. The Digital Agenda 2030 envisions a continent where technology is a key driver of sustainable development, economic diversification, and social inclusion. Through innovative technologies and strategic collaborations, Africa has begun to harness the potential of the digital revolution to address critical challenges such as unemployment, poverty, and inequality.

Africa’s digital landscape has made notable strides, however, the path towards achieving the Digital Agenda 2030 remains complex and requires a multi-faceted approach. The continent’s vast rural population continues to experience limited access to critical digital infrastructure and services. Despite the growth in Internet users, with over 566 million individuals online, the Internet penetration rate of 43% lags significantly behind the global average of 66%.

This digital divide poses a challenge to realizing the full potential of the Digital Agenda 2030, especially in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The continent's young population, combined with the rise of fintech, e-commerce, and digital services, presents a unique opportunity to build a robust digital economy. The key questions now are; 1. How can Africa bridge this divide and ensure that digital transformation reaches every corner of the continent? 2. Would Africa be able to meet up with the Sustainable Development Goals - SDG’s benchmark? 3. How achievable is the Digital Agenda 2030?

In response to these challenges, the Global Digital Compact (GDC) , a UN initiative aimed at fostering an open, free, and secure digital environment, serves as a critical framework for Africa. By adhering to principles of universal access, digital inclusion, and the safeguarding of human rights online, Africa’s digital transformation will align with global standards. The GDC offers guidance on leveraging digital public goods, regulating emerging technologies, and building trust in the digital economy. This framework will be integrated into the summit’s discussions to ensure that Africa’s Digital Agenda 2030 aligns with global norms while focusing on the continent's unique needs.

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-2024>

2.3 Programme Outline

<https://aficta.africa/summits/summit-2024#agenda>

CHAPTER 3

3.1.0 Introduction

The 12th AfICTA Summit Day-1



Ms. Ulandi Exner warmly welcomed participants to the 12th Africa ICT Alliance Summit, highlighting the event as a pivotal platform to celebrate and accelerate Africa's digital transformation. She emphasized the continent's rapid advancements in ICT, such as mobile network expansion, Internet penetration, and innovative digital solutions tailored to local challenges, and noted how these developments are reshaping economies and societies. While celebrating these successes, she acknowledged

ongoing challenges, including digital literacy gaps, infrastructure disparities, and limited connectivity in rural areas.

Ms. Exner underscored the need for inclusive digital ecosystems that empower all citizens, stressing that achieving a fully connected, tech-driven Africa requires strong multi-sectoral partnerships among governments, private sector, civil society, and academia. She praised AfICTA's role in fostering collaboration and policy advocacy across Africa's ICT landscape.

Highlighting Africa's youthful, entrepreneurial population, she called on stakeholders to harness young innovators who are driving change across sectors such as fintech, e-health, agritech, and edtech. Looking ahead, Ms. Exner pointed to emerging technologies, 5G, AI, blockchain, IoT, that hold vast potential but require collaborative efforts to ensure equitable access, cybersecurity, data privacy, digital inclusion, and environmentally sustainable digital infrastructure.

In closing, she called on all attendees to embrace the responsibilities that come with these opportunities, to deepen partnerships, and to commit to a shared vision of a connected, inclusive, and prosperous Africa. She expressed optimism for fruitful discussions and collaborations during the summit and urged participants to leave inspired to turn their collective vision into reality.

The 12th Africa ICT Alliance Summit, themed "**Digital Agenda 2030: Shaping Africa's Future through Innovative Technology and Collaboration,**" commenced virtually. The summit, which will run for two days, features a series of sessions aimed at fulfilling the digital agenda for everyone in Africa. The theme resonates strongly with the aspirations shared for a prosperous, interconnected, and technology empowered Africa. The summit brings together key players from Africa's digital landscape, sharing knowledge, forging partnerships, and advocating for policies that can accelerate collective digital transformation. The focus is on ensuring that digital transformation reaches every corner of the continent, leaving no one behind. The summit also addresses the challenges of digital literacy, disparities in access to digital infrastructure, and limited connectivity in rural and underserved areas. The summit is a critical space for dialogue, collaboration, and action, and it's an opportunity to reflect on the tremendous strides made in digital transformation and to chart the way forward for a future where technology drives economic growth, social development, and sustainable progress.

3.1.1 Summit Sub Themes

- Improving Digital Infrastructure Development Towards a Smart Africa: Whose Responsibility?
- Bridging Digital Divides through Digital Literacy and Skills
- Fostering Digital Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Sustainable Business Growth
- Addressing Cybersecurity Challenges, Data Privacy Issues and other Delays in Digitalization
- ICANN -BC Outreach to African Business Owners
- 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 Mr. Thabo Mashegoane, former Chairperson of AfICTA



Mr. Mason S. Cole, ICANN-BC Chair. As a proud sponsor of the 12th AfICTA Summit, Mr. Mason Cole expressed his appreciation to AfICTA for providing a platform to engage with businesses and decision-makers across Africa. He delivered a keynote presentation outlining the activities and priorities of the ICANN Business Constituency (BC), emphasizing its vital role in representing businesses globally

in the Internet ecosystem.

Mr. Cole provided an overview of the BC's membership, which comprises over 80 members, including startups from economically disadvantaged regions to Fortune 50 companies. He highlighted the BC's mission of supporting business providers, services, and e-commerce in fostering consumer trust and promoting their interests online.

In his address, Mr. Cole underscored several key focus areas of the BC: Registration Data Accessibility; Advocating for a more usable and balanced Registration Data Request Service (RDRS) to ensure legitimate access to registration data while aligning with evolving global privacy laws. DNS Abuse Mitigation, Highlighting the BC's continued efforts to develop policies and tools to address DNS abuse, an area the constituency has actively worked on for the past five years. gTLD Expansion: Promoting responsible policy development for new gTLDs to meet the needs of businesses and ensure effective implementation of Rights Protection Mechanisms (RPMs). Completion of Overdue Community Work: Encouraging the finalization of critical projects such as Thick WHOIS and PPSAI to enhance DNS stability and usability.

He concluded by calling for increased collaboration with African businesses, emphasizing the need for: Sharing progress and policy objectives to foster collective growth.

Building relationships that enhance DNS stability and secure e-commerce in Africa.

Strengthening ICANN's compliance function to support a balanced and proactive Internet governance structure. Bringing African perspectives to BC outreach initiatives to align global

policies with regional priorities. Mr. Cole reiterated the BC’s commitment to supporting businesses in Africa and globally while promoting a safe, trusted, and resilient Internet environment.

Mr. Brian Scarpelli – Senior Global Policy Counsel, ACT | The App Association

Mr. Brian Scarpelli, in his pre-recorded keynote, underscored Africa’s digital future as an unparalleled opportunity for socioeconomic transformation. Representing ACT | The App Association, a global trade group supporting small tech developers, he applauded AfICTA’s efforts in shaping the Digital Agenda 2030. Brian emphasized that digital technologies are critical tools to tackle unemployment, poverty, and inequality and must be implemented inclusively. He pointed out that strategic policy development, investment in local innovation, and alignment with global standards will ensure that digital progress reaches all segments of African society, particularly marginalized communities. He also addressed the infrastructural disparities that persist across Africa, particularly in rural areas. These disparities, he noted, pose a major barrier to achieving the full potential of the continent’s digital transformation. Mr. Scarpelli advocated for **multi-sector partnerships** and inclusive policymaking that engage civil society, SMEs, and grassroots innovators. He reinforced ACT’s commitment to working with African stakeholders to ensure that **tech-driven development** is equitable and sustainable. His remarks served as a call to action for both governments and private entities to step up their roles in delivering on the promise of a connected Africa.

Prof. Latif Ladid – Founder & President, IPv6 Forum:

Prof. Latif Ladid delivered a highly informative and engaging two-part session that combined Internet history, IPv6 architecture, and the future of digital innovation. In the first half, he recounted how foundational scientific discoveries from Al-Khwarizmi’s algorithms to the invention of zero continue to influence modern Internet protocols. He discussed the evolution of the Internet, the flaws of IPv4 (particularly NAT and limited addressability), and how IPv6 restores the end-to-end connectivity model, improving security, scalability, and performance. Prof. Ladid emphasized that Africa must not be left behind, as other regions (notably Asia) have taken the lead in IPv6 deployment.

In the second half, he linked the progression of web technologies Web 1.0 to Web 3.0, semantic web, and the MetaNet to current innovations in IoT, AI, blockchain, and 5G. He stressed that IPv6 is a fundamental enabler of these technologies, particularly for secure peer-to-peer communication, decentralized architecture, and IoT scalability. Prof. Ladid highlighted how African innovation, such as contributions to AWS Elastic IP by South African researchers, demonstrates the continent's capacity for leadership in the digital space. He also raised concerns about legacy IPv4 security risks, AI governance, and the 2.5 billion people still without Internet access, urging a united and immediate global response

3.2.2 First Panel Session

<p>Improving Digital Infrastructure Development Towards a Smart Africa: Whose Responsibility</p> <p>Watch the Recording here</p>	<p>Moderated by Mr. Paul Rowney, Former Deputy Chair, AfICTA</p> <p>Speakers: Mr. Peterking Quaye, Founder & Executive Director West Africa ICT Action Network</p> <p>Mr. Aro Leonard, Broadcast Media, Development Communication, and Social Transformation Expert</p>
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	Mr. Atai Albert Akpan , COO Transventel LLC, Atlanta US
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Introduction:

Mr. Paul Rowney (Moderator) opened the session by underscoring the critical role digital infrastructure plays in driving Africa’s socio-economic development. He challenged stakeholders to reflect on ownership, responsibility, and the need for collaborative strategies across sectors. Emphasizing inclusivity, he noted that digital transformation must serve people equitably across urban and rural areas. He stressed that governments often play dual roles, setting frameworks but also unintentionally hindering progress through overregulation. Mr. Rowney called for a new level of coordination between governments and private players to create enabling environments for scalable digital infrastructure, particularly emphasizing public-private partnerships as the cornerstone for building a truly smart Africa.

Mr. Aro Leonard highlighted that digital transformation is a shared responsibility among governments, private sector, civil society, and the media. He emphasized that media should not only inform but also serve as an accountability partner and driver of digital literacy. He called for upgrading the media’s capacity and using it to amplify local innovation stories.

Drawing from practical examples, Mr. Leonard stressed that unreliable electricity, especially in rural areas, hinders digital development. He advocated for solar and off-grid solutions as viable alternatives. He also critiqued outdated curricula and shared his personal experience with early digital literacy initiatives, urging that similar innovation be institutionalized across educational systems.

In a second contribution, Mr. Leonard stressed the importance of storytelling in changing Africa’s image globally. He illustrated how underrepresented regions like Onitsha in Nigeria could be transformed through strategic branding and focused investment. He noted that ignorance both internal and external continues to undermine Africa’s investment appeal.

Leonard advocated for proactive media engagement, noting that African nations need to document and broadcast their strengths. Storytelling, in this context, becomes a tool for economic empowerment, national unity, and international relevance. Without an intentional strategy to frame Africa’s narrative, opportunities will continue to be missed.

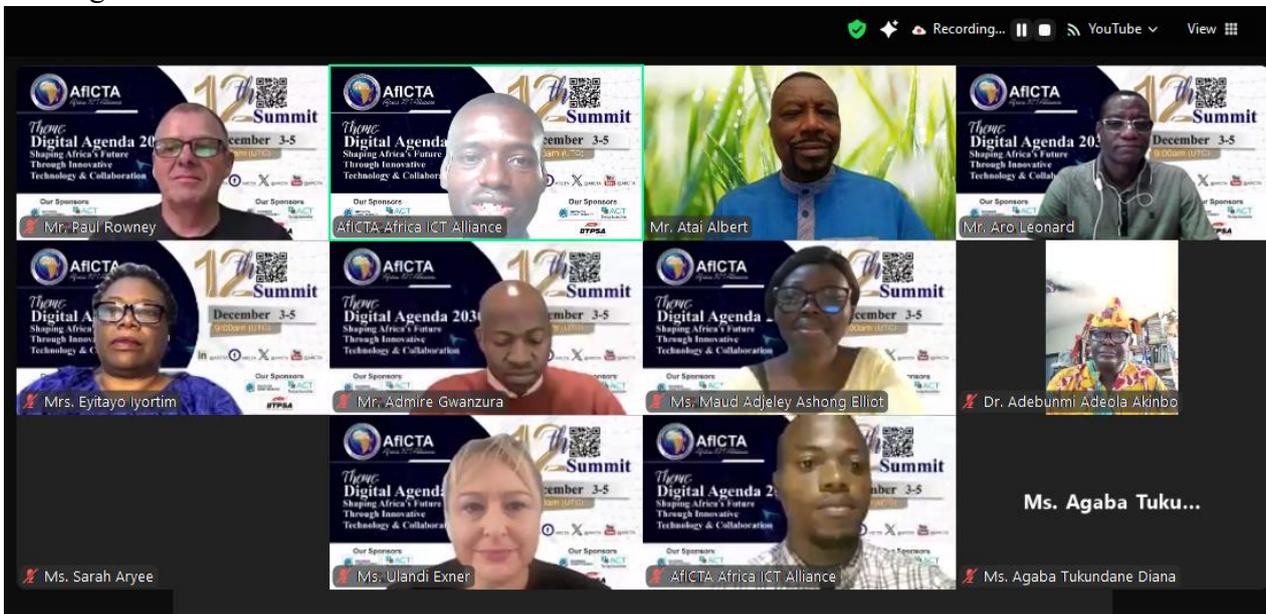
Mr. Atai Albert Akpan (COO, TransVental LLC – SDG Focus)

Mr. Akpan linked digital infrastructure directly with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasizing that Africa’s future economic success depends on integrating technology into core sectors. He identified digital inclusion as a catalyst for poverty reduction, gender equality, education access, and environmental sustainability.

He warned that Africa is underutilizing global frameworks and missing out on the \$26 trillion green and blue economy potential. Akpan emphasized that climate action and energy transition, when intertwined with digital infrastructure, can revolutionize development. He called for increased implementation of SDG-aligned national policies, renewable energy solutions, and digital skill building.

Expanding on public-private partnerships, Mr. Akpan cited WeChat as a benchmark for government-enabled digital transformation. He explained how platforms like WeChat enabled economic scale by solving structural problems like customer acquisition and manufacturing

coordination. Africa, he argued, can replicate this model using sovereign-backed platforms for ecommerce, logistics, and trade. He lamented the lack of digital coordination within the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and advocated for a continental platform to synchronize trade data, production planning, and resource allocation. For Africa to stop playing catch-up, he said, governments must support digital entrepreneurs with strategic infrastructure and policy backing.



3.2.3 Second Panel Session

<p>Bridging Digital Divides through Digital Literacy and Skills</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>Mrs. Eytayo Iyortim, <i>Président/Chairperson of Excom, AFTLD</i></p> <p>Mr. Admire Gwanzura, <i>Non-Executive Directors & Immediate Past President, IITPSA</i></p> <p>Mr. Abimbola Abioye, <i>Group Managing Director, Fintrak Software & President ISPON</i></p> <p>Ms. Maud Adjeley Ashong Elliot, <i>Lecturer, IT Studies Department University of Professional Studies, Accra</i></p>
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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. Admire Gwanzura – Non-Executive Director & Past President, IITPSA

Mr. Gwanzura emphasized that digital literacy is critical to addressing Africa’s socio-economic inequality. He noted that with only 40% of African schools having internet access, the continent risks missing out on the \$180 billion digital economy projected by 2025. He advocated for investment in digital skills to unlock productivity and economic growth.

He also stressed the importance of public-private partnerships in extending connectivity, referencing successful programs in South Africa that deliver free internet access to underserved communities. He concluded that scaling such initiatives across the continent could accelerate digital inclusion and economic participation.

Dr. Adebunmi Adeola Akinbo – CEO, DNS Africa

Dr. Akinbo addressed the danger of over-concentrating digital infrastructure in urban centers, warning that it could fuel rural-urban migration and further deepen inequalities. He cited Nigeria’s NIRA Academy and partnerships with NITDA and NCC as good examples of community-rooted digital education initiatives that can help address this imbalance.

He advocated for community-driven innovation using low or zero-budget models. By involving local actors and giving governments nominal roles to encourage ownership and legitimacy, grassroots digital projects can be both sustainable and scalable. His message was clear: empowerment starts at the local level.

Mrs. Eyitayo Iyortim – *Président/Chairperson of Excom, AfTLD* introduced the concept of **community-led demand creation** for connectivity. She observed that many communities passively wait for governments to act, rather than organizing themselves to request digital access as they would roads or water. She stressed that organized demand attracts the attention of both public institutions and private investors.

She argued that digital connectivity enhances services like healthcare and education and urged communities to initiate partnerships with NGOs, ISPs, and tech hubs. Her approach emphasized shifting the mindset from dependency to advocacy and co-creation.

Ms. Maud Adjeley Ashong Elliot – Lecturer, University of Professional Studies, Accra

Ms. Elliot emphasized the role of regional resource sharing in expanding access to digital education. She praised WACREN’s model of negotiating reduced internet costs for universities as a successful strategy that could be replicated across other sectors. She stressed that affordability is a key barrier to inclusion.

She also spoke about the importance of incorporating digital literacy into formal education, noting the resistance among faculty members to digital tools like AI. To improve digital engagement, she advocated for culturally relevant, localized content and gamification strategies that make learning more effective and inclusive.

Mr. Abimbola Abioye– Private Sector Leader (Software Industry)

Abimbola criticized inefficient infrastructure deployment in urban areas, which has resulted in over-saturation, while rural areas remain digitally starved. He suggested that government should regulate ICT infrastructure investment to avoid redundancy, encouraging resource sharing and equitable coverage.

He also highlighted the knowledge gap in digital tool usage. Even those with access to devices often underuse them due to limited exposure or training. He referenced Nigeria’s 3MTT initiative as a step toward closing this gap and encouraged greater investment in national digital skilling programs.

Mrs. Eyitayo Iyortim – Chairperson, AfTLD (Follow-up Interventions)

In a follow-up, Mrs. Iyortim reiterated the national significance of ccTLDs such as .ng, .ke, .gh, and .za. She described them as assets “owned by the people” and crucial to Africa’s digital sovereignty and entrepreneurship. She also outlined AfTLD’s mentorship programs for underperforming ccTLDs, in partnership with ICANN, to build capacity and technical competence.

Additionally, she emphasized the need for research rooted in African realities. Many digital projects fail because they are based on foreign assumptions. She called for stronger collaboration between academia, government, and civil society in designing locally informed digital policies.

Closing Remarks - Ms. Rachael Shitanda

Ms. Shitanda concluded the session by calling on participants to become digital literacy ambassadors in their communities. She reiterated the urgency of inclusive internet access and reminded stakeholders that true digital inclusion requires persistent, collaborative action.

She encouraged post-event partnerships among participants to implement real solutions, monitor progress, and share impact stories. According to her, events like this should be the beginning of long-term cooperation to make digital empowerment a reality for all Africans.



3.2.4 Third Panel Session

<p>Fostering Digital Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Sustainable Business Growth</p> <p>Watch the Recording here</p>	<p>Moderated</p> <p>Ms. Sarah Aryee, Associate Cloud Engineer & Administrator, Yazi Entrepreneur Ghana</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Dr. Jimson Olufuye, CEO, Kontemporary Konsulting Ltd</p> <p>Mr. Olusegun Olugbile, CEO Data Analytics Privacy Technologies - DAPT</p> <p>Ikechukwu Okoli PhD, Cofounder, Capsule UK</p> <p>Dr. Houda Chihi, Senior Researcher at the Innov'COM Laboratory of Sup'COM in Tunisia.</p> <p>Ms. Jacqueline HansonKotei, Senior Manager, Ent. Information Security & Governance MTN Ghana Accra, Ghana</p>
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Introduction

Ms. Sarah Aryee – Moderator, Associate Cloud Engineer & Entrepreneur, Ghana

Ms. Aryee opened the session by underscoring the growing importance of digital innovation in driving Africa's entrepreneurial landscape and sustainable development. She welcomed a diverse audience comprising students, professionals, and policymakers, framing the session as a convergence point for dialogue, learning, and action. Her opening remarks emphasized that inclusive and forward-thinking conversations were critical to ensure that Africa's digital transformation is not only visionary but also pragmatic and scalable.

She also championed an open and participatory environment, encouraging active audience engagement and critical reflection. Ms. Aryee spotlighted the unique value that multidisciplinary panelists brought to the discussion, with backgrounds in ICT, venture capital, AI, governance, and cybersecurity. Her moderation helped frame the session around not just showcasing innovation, but finding collaborative solutions that can move Africa forward in areas of entrepreneurship, policy, education, and infrastructure.

Dr. Ikechukwu Okoli – Co-founder, Capsule UK

Dr. Okoli emphasized the disruptive potential of startups in Africa's digital economy, particularly in their speed of innovation and ability to scale quickly. He cited examples like Paystack and Flutterwave, which exemplify how technology can accelerate the path to success for young companies. He noted that fintech, because of its low barrier to entry, has attracted the most attention, but this should not limit entrepreneurs from looking beyond to sectors with deeper impact potential.

He highlighted agriculture and manufacturing as two underexplored sectors that present enormous digital innovation opportunities. While acknowledging that these sectors require more capital and technical infrastructure than fintech, he argued they are crucial for Africa's broader socio-economic transformation. Food security, industrial growth, and job creation could be significantly advanced if entrepreneurs invest in building scalable technology in these areas.

Dr. Houda Chihi – Senior Researcher, InnoCom Laboratory, Tunisia

Dr. Chihi shared Tunisia's success in fostering digital innovation through a combination of policy, infrastructure, and education. She outlined how investments in broadband, the rollout of 5G, and AI hubs have made Tunisia a regional leader in digital transformation. She also highlighted how Tunisia's partnerships with international tech firms such as Huawei have catalyzed local capacity building and entrepreneurship.

She emphasized the value of university-startup collaboration to close the gap between research and market demand. Dr. Chihi called for integrated policymaking that bridges academia and industry, highlighting public funding, curriculum reform, and startup-friendly intellectual property laws as crucial enablers. Her core message was that innovation ecosystems thrive when educational, industrial, and governmental actors collaborate.

Mr. Olusegun Olugbile – CEO, Data Analytics Privacy Technologies (DAPT)

Mr. Olugbile turned the spotlight to an overlooked area data analytics, privacy, and regulatory technology (RegTech) as fertile ground for African entrepreneurs. He lamented that while fintech has boomed, data-driven compliance technologies remain underdeveloped across Africa. He pointed out that growing privacy regulations across the continent represent an opportunity, not a constraint, for innovation.

Using Nigeria's data protection model as an example, he called on startups to leverage compliance as a service opportunity. Mr. Olugbile encouraged building scalable privacy tools, automation software, and compliance platforms to support governments and businesses. He insisted that local innovators must lead the charge in building Africa's RegTech landscape, using digital regulations as a launchpad for growth.

He recommended using frameworks like Agile in educational reforms to promote flexibility, collaboration, and continuous improvement. Mr. Olugbile also called for the creation of an "African Knowledge Partnership" to harmonize digital curriculum strategies across the continent, ensuring that education systems are aligned with both global trends and local realities.

Dr. Jimson Olufuye – CEO, Kontemporary Konsulting Ltd.

Dr. Olufuye addressed the broader economic relevance of digital technologies, estimating that digital contributions now account for about 17% of Nigeria's GDP. However, he pointed out a critical weakness in the uneven implementation of existing frameworks like the AU Digital Strategy and the Malabo Convention. He stressed that policy must go hand in hand with infrastructure development, especially in countries with low internet penetration.

He advocated for increased investment in digital infrastructure, the efficient use of universal service funds, and the adoption of national startup policies like Nigeria's Startup Act. Dr. Olufuye

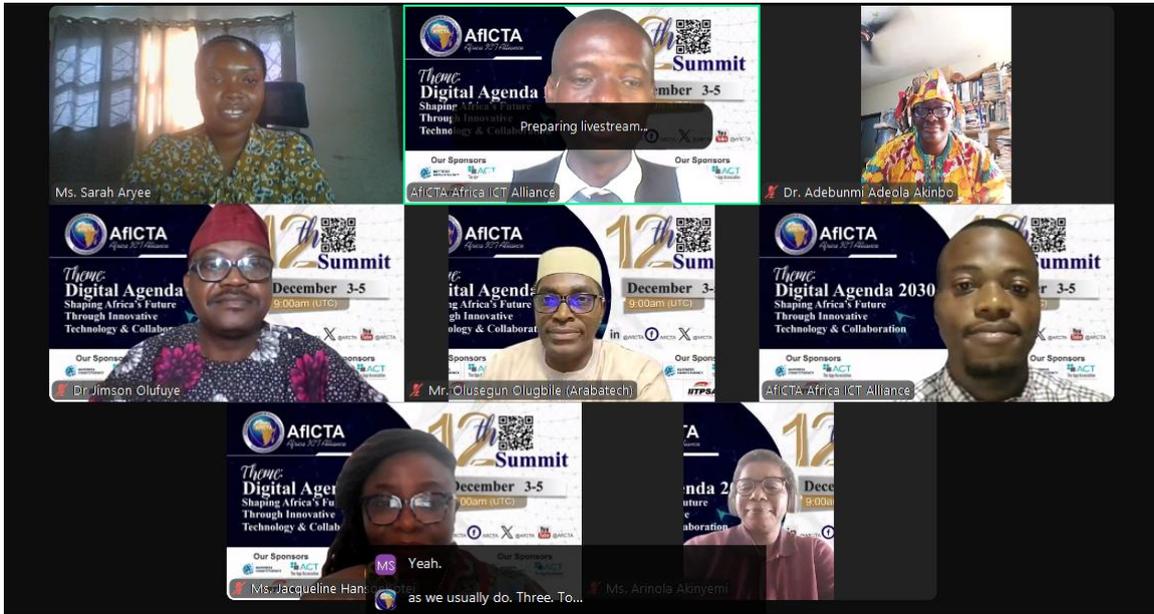
highlighted the importance of stakeholder collaboration, urging platforms like AfICTA to be used to connect civil society, government, and business actors to collectively advance Africa's innovation agenda.

Ms. Jacqueline Hansen Kote – Senior Manager, Information Security & Governance, MTN Ghana

Ms. Kote offered practical cybersecurity strategies for startups and SMEs, advocating a “security-by-design” approach from day one. She provided clear, low-cost solutions such as strong password policies, encrypted networks, and use of open-source security tools. She also emphasized that risk assessments and simple governance frameworks (like incident response policies) can help mitigate common threats.

She extended her contributions to digital education, calling for early integration of tech skills like coding and cybersecurity into school curricula. Ms. Kote stressed the value of partnerships between schools and industry to offer mentorship, internships, and real-world project experience. Her central message was that cybersecurity and digital readiness must be foundational elements in both business development and education systems.

To drive inclusive digital transformation across Africa, **governments should update national ICT strategies to enforce IPv6-only mandates**, standardize Web3 technologies, and support integration of AI, blockchain, and IPv6 to ensure secure, smart digital systems. Public-private-academic collaboration must be strengthened through incentives for startups, fintech, and telcos to co-develop infrastructure and deliver services especially in underserved areas. **Curriculum reform is essential**, embedding digital literacy, emerging technologies, and cybersecurity principles at all education levels. Community-led innovation should be supported by providing recognition, funding, and practical tools for local initiatives, while media storytelling can amplify success cases and foster broader engagement. To ensure equity, broadband deployment must be regulated geographically, alongside infrastructure sharing policies to prevent market monopolies. Africa must also invest in its own IP address blocks, promote use of ccTLDs as digital assets, and digitize local cultures, languages, and heritage to build sovereign, inclusive digital identities. Finally, partnerships should leverage regional consortiums like WACREN to support cooperative internet negotiations beyond academia and into public services, healthcare, and SMEs.



3.2.5 Fourth Panel Session

<p>Addressing Cybersecurity Challenges, Data Privacy Issues and other Delays in Digitalization</p> <p>Watch the Recording here</p>	<p>Moderated by Dr. Adebunmi Adeola Akinbo, Founder and CEO of DNS Africa Media and Communications. Founder/Team Lead for Community NetHUBs Africa, and Culture Games Africa</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Dr. Jimson Olufuye, CEO, Kontemporary Konsulting Ltd & Founder/fmr Chair, AfICTA;</p> <p>Mr. Babatunde Bamigboye. ESQ, Head of the Legal, Enforcement, and Regulations Department, Nigeria Data Protection Commission - NDPC</p> <p>Ms. Agaba Tukundane Diana, CISO, Mentor, Cyber Resilience Evangelist and Strategist</p> <p>Dr. Melissa Sassi along with Mr. Eddie, Venture Partner, Machinelab Ventures</p> <p>Dr. Robinson Tombari Sibe, CEO Digital Footprints Ltd</p>
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Introduction

The second day of the 12th AfICTA Summit featured a rich and dynamic panel session focused on the growing importance of digitalization, cybersecurity, and data privacy in Africa. The session was moderated by Dr. Adebunmi Adeola Akinbo, with a lead presentation delivered on behalf of Mr. Babatunde Bamigboye, Esq., Head of Legal, Enforcement, and Regulations, Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC). The panel also featured distinguished experts from across Africa and the diaspora who contributed diverse insights into the challenges and potential solutions for achieving a secure, inclusive, and harmonized digital environment across the

continent.

Policy Question: The panel focused on key policy issues surrounding cybersecurity, data privacy, and digital development in Africa. Ms. Ibukunoluwa Owa, representing the NDPC, emphasized the need for greater awareness and inter-agency collaboration to enforce Nigeria's data protection laws. Dr. Jimson Olufuye called for African countries to harmonize cybersecurity policies and actively shape global data privacy frameworks. Ms. Agaba Tukundane Diana highlighted the importance of regular policy reviews and cybersecurity awareness to build resilience. Dr. Melissa Sassi stressed that innovation and cybersecurity must go hand-in-hand, advocating for supportive policies for startups. Dr. Robinson Sibe underscored the need for clear digital infrastructure roadmaps and responsible data management. Overall, the panel emphasized collaboration, enforcement, and inclusive policies to drive Africa's secure digital future.

Dr. Jimson Olufuye, CEO of Kontemporary Konsulting Ltd and Chair of AfICTA's Advisory Council, addressed Africa's role in shaping global data privacy policies. He recognized the progress made by continental bodies like the African Union Commission (AUC) and UNECA, especially with frameworks such as the Malabo Convention. However, he pointed out that many African countries, including Nigeria, have yet to fully ratify these agreements, hindering regional harmonization efforts. Dr. Olufuye emphasized the urgent need for governments to move beyond mere strategies to operationalize plans with clearly defined milestones and adequate budgets. He also highlighted the importance of raising awareness about existing governance frameworks and fostering cross-border collaboration to better enforce data protection laws and cyber policies. He referenced the ongoing development of frameworks like the Tripod Cybersecurity Maturity Model (TCMM) to guide enforcement and encourage a security culture.

Ms. Agaba Tukundane Diana, an acclaimed Cyber Resilience Evangelist and CISO, focused on the essential role of cybersecurity awareness and culture within organizations and societies. She underscored that people are the most critical component in cybersecurity ecosystems, and mature security cultures begin with informed individuals who understand their roles in safeguarding data and infrastructure. Diana argued that cybersecurity awareness campaigns are pivotal in empowering individuals to demand enforcement of cybersecurity laws and regulations. She also warned that without widespread awareness, many breaches occur unknowingly due to lack of knowledge, emphasizing that education and awareness are as vital as technology and processes.

Dr. Melissa Sassi, Venture Partner at Machinelab Ventures, brought an entrepreneurial and innovation-based perspective. She advocated for African-grown tech solutions to address regional challenges. Dr. Sassi emphasized the need to fund and scale local startups building cybersecurity and privacy tools tailored to African contexts. She also highlighted digital inclusion and youth engagement as critical to Africa's long-term cyber resilience.

Mr. Eddie DeCurtis discussed the critical role of mobile network operators (MNOs) in protecting subscribers against fraud through responsible data sharing practices. He explained that his organization, SIRS, partners directly with MNOs to provide a platform that securely exposes Customer Proprietary Network Information (CPNI) to trusted aggregators, such as Twilio and others, which then serve banking and fintech applications. This solution costs nothing to the MNOs and not only protects consumers from fraud but also opens new revenue streams for operators. Eddie emphasized that regulatory changes are needed in markets like the Philippines and Vietnam to prevent unauthorized sharing of sensitive subscriber data and called for stronger legal frameworks that protect consumers while enabling innovation.

Dr. Robinson Tombari Sibe, CEO of Digital Footprints Ltd, Dr. Robinson Tombari Sibe highlighted the complexity of data privacy in Africa’s evolving digital landscape, emphasizing the need for deliberate and context-specific measures. He noted that while data protection laws such as GDPR and Nigeria’s NDPR exist, their application requires detailed data protection impact assessments (DPIAs) before every major project to identify risks and mitigation strategies. He stressed the importance of technical safeguards like encryption and breach management processes and called for enhanced investigative capabilities to manage and contain breaches effectively. Dr. Sibe also stressed that data protection regulations must evolve continually in response to technological advancements and unique local contexts.



3.2.6 Fifth Panel Session

<p>ICANN -BC Outreach to African Business Owners: Harnessing the Power of New gTLDs - Fostering Innovation and Combatting DNS Abuse in Africa’s Digital Economy.</p> <p>Watch the Recording here</p>	<p>Moderated by</p> <p>Mr. Segun Omoloso, Program Officer, AfICTA</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Mr. Bob Ochieng, Senior Director, TLD Program, ICANN Africa</p> <p>Mr. Yaovi Atohoun, Director, Stakeholder Engagement and Operations, ICANN Africa</p> <p>Mr. Tola Sogbesan, CEO, Axiom Ltd and Vice Chair Elect, Finance & Operations, ICANN BC</p> <p>Mr. Segunfunmi Olajide, Vice Chair elect for Policy Coordination - ICANN-BC & CEO Heritech Consulting</p>
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Introduction

The session, moderated by Mr. **Segun Omoloso**, Program Officer at AfICTA, brought together key leaders from ICANN Africa and the ICANN Business Constituency (BC) to discuss the

critical role of new generic top-level domains (gTLDs) in Africa's digital economy. The dialogue emphasized how new gTLDs can promote innovation, increase competition, and address challenges such as DNS abuse, which remains a significant issue for African businesses operating online. Session Overview: This session explored the pivotal role of new generic top-level domains (gTLDs) in enhancing Africa's digital economy. It focused on innovation, competition, and strategies to mitigate Domain Name System (DNS) abuse. The outreach emphasized the importance of engaging African business owners and stakeholders in the evolving domain space through ICANN's Business Constituency (BC).

Policy Questions: The moderator of the session started by highlighting the key questions that formed the session discussions. How can African businesses harness the power of new gTLDs to drive innovation and economic growth in the digital economy? What efforts are being made by ICANN to ensure African stakeholders are included in the new gTLD program and DNS ecosystem? What strategies can be adopted to mitigate DNS abuse and protect African businesses online? How can the ICANN Business Constituency encourage broader African participation in Internet governance and policy development? What policy recommendations can you offer for African governments and private sector actors to better engage in the evolving gTLD and domain name space?

Mr. Bob Ochieng, Senior Director of the TLD Program at ICANN Africa, provided an insightful briefing on the forthcoming round of new gTLD applications, scheduled for the second quarter of 2026. He emphasized the significance of the Applicant Support Program, which offers substantial fee discounts, up to 85%, for eligible applicants, including non-profit organizations, indigenous communities, intergovernmental bodies, and small-to-medium enterprises operating in developing economies, particularly across Africa.

Mr. Ochieng also underscored the technical responsibilities associated with managing a domain registry, as well as the rigorous evaluation procedures put in place to ensure the continued stability and security of the Domain Name System (DNS). In addition to the Applicant Support Program, he highlighted the Registries and Providers Evaluation Program, another support mechanism designed to lower barriers and encourage wider participation, especially among African stakeholders. He noted that the expanded availability of gTLDs enhances innovation and competition in the domain space. This diversity not only offers registrants a broader range of domain name options but also drives registry operators to innovate with competitive pricing models and value-added services. Ultimately, this creates new opportunities for businesses and organizations to uniquely position themselves online.

Mr. Yaovi Atohoun, Director of Stakeholder Engagement and Operations at ICANN Africa, underscored the necessity for African businesses to actively engage with ICANN's processes to maximize the opportunities that new gTLDs present. He encouraged continuous connection and interaction with the ICANN community, pointing participants to resources and engagement calendars available on the ICANN website to stay informed and involved. Mr. Atohoun detailed ICANN's multi-stakeholder model as a collaborative framework involving ICANN staff, board, and community groups that ensures transparent, bottom-up policy development. He explained how this model is vital in tackling DNS abuse, including malware, phishing, spam, and botnets, through community-driven policies and data sharing. He described initiatives such as the Domain Abuse Activity Reporting (DAAR) system, the Domain Metrics project which provide data and tools for monitoring and mitigating abuse. Capacity-building programs like ICANN Learn and

virtual or in-person trainings are emphasized as essential to empower stakeholders to address security challenges.

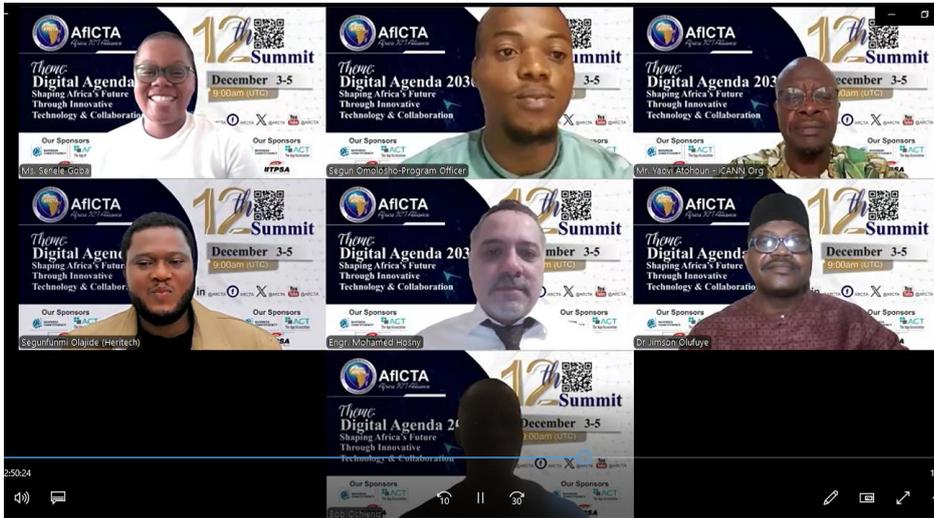
Mr. Tola Sogbesan, CEO of Axiom Ltd and Vice Chair Elect for Finance & Operations of the ICANN Business Constituency, highlighted the benefits of the Business Constituency to African startups and SMEs. He emphasized how BC membership enables businesses to influence global Internet policy, gain capacity-building opportunities, and build networks with global tech giants. He shared firsthand experiences of tackling DNS abuse, illustrating the value of having a voice in policy discussions that impact business operations online. Mr. Sogbesan discussed the significant role of the Business Constituency (BC) in advocating for African business interests within ICANN. He credited pioneers like Dr. Jimson Olufuye and Lawrence Olawale Robert for raising African representation and noted how membership fee discounts have enabled greater African participation. He emphasized that the BC fosters an inclusive environment for businesses of all sizes, from startups to global corporations, ensuring diverse voices are heard. He highlighted the importance of capacity development and fellowship programs in empowering African stakeholders and expressed optimism about Africa's growing influence within ICANN.

Ms. Segunfunmi Olajide, Vice Chair-Elect for Policy Coordination at ICANN's Business Constituency (BC) and CEO of Heritech Consulting, emphasized the urgent need for African businesses to embrace digital transformation. He encouraged startups and entrepreneurs to join the BC in order to benefit from its collective advocacy power, collaborative network, and direct influence on Internet governance policies.

Mr. Olajide highlighted the importance of digital inclusion and cross-sector collaboration as essential tools for closing the digital divide across Africa. In response to questions about the value of BC membership for startups, he noted that the BC offers a unique platform to shape policy discussions around DNS abuse, domain name management, and internet security. Drawing from her own company's experience in combating DNS abuse, he illustrated how active involvement in BC policy-making translates into tangible solutions for African businesses. Beyond advocacy, Mr. Olajide emphasized the BC's offerings in capacity-building, knowledge sharing, and global networking, all crucial for startups seeking to innovate and scale within the digital economy.

Describing the BC as the collective voice of commercial businesses within ICANN's multi-stakeholder ecosystem, he reiterated its mission: to advocate for policies that support business growth, foster innovation, and promote a secure and inclusive Internet environment, regardless of company size or geographic location. Mr. Olajide acknowledged the current underrepresentation of African businesses in the BC and called for greater participation to harness the constituency's impact and opportunities. He also shared pathways for joining the BC, either through the official website (www.icannbc.org) or in partnership with organizations like AfICTA, noting available membership discounts and the strategic advantage of being part of policy-shaping conversations in global internet governance.

Dr. Jimson Olufuye, Chair of AfICTA Advisory Council, shared a success story of African business participation in ICANN BC. He acknowledged the late Marilyn Cade foundational role in promoting business engagement in ICANN from Africa and encouraged African businesses to seize the 85% discount applicant support opportunity. Dr. Olufuye called for unity and collaboration among African stakeholders to amplify their voice on the global digital stage.



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. Rachael Shitanda, Deputy Chair & VC East Africa, AfICTA</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Engr. Mohamed Hosny, Digital Transformation Executive, HUAWEI</p> <p>Mr. Waddah Fadul, Founder and President, Institute of Tomorrow</p> <p>Ms. Senele Goba, Founder, 4IR Innovation and Founder, Ososayensi Education Advancement</p> <p>Mr. Segunfunmi Olajide, Vice Chair elect for Policy Coordination - ICANN-BC & CEO Heritech Consulting</p>
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Ms. Rachael Shitanda opened the session by framing the conversation around the intersection of emerging technologies and environmental sustainability in Africa. She highlighted the widespread integration of technologies in agriculture, wildlife monitoring, vegetation mapping, greenhouse gas tracking, and water resource management. Rachael emphasized that while technological progress is promising, Africa must match these advancements with appropriate skill development and policy interventions to ensure sustainable and climate-conscious outcomes.

Policy Question: The moderator of Session 6 began the discussion by presenting key policy questions to guide expert insights on emerging technologies and environmental sustainability in Africa. Ms. Senele Goba was asked how industrial automation could be integrated into Africa's industrial development while ensuring environmental responsibility, and what types of technical and professional skills are essential to align emerging technologies with sustainability goals. Mr. Segunfunmi Olajide was invited to speak on the role of the private sector in shaping inclusive policies for sustainable technology adoption, and to recommend specific frameworks or multi-stakeholder initiatives that African governments could adopt to effectively address climate change. Engr. Mohamed Hosny was asked to share insights on how Huawei's AI models have enhanced weather prediction compared to traditional methods, how Africa can leverage such AI-driven

forecasting systems for climate resilience, how these differ from traditional cloud seeding techniques like those used in the UAE, and which specific AI methodologies can be adopted to optimize weather prediction and support environmental sustainability.

Ms. Senele Goba - Founder, 4IR Innovation & Ososayensi Education Advancement, focused on industrial automation as a means to improve production efficiency and reduce environmental impact. She emphasized the importance of aligning automation with environmental KPIs and called for strategic upskilling across Africa in fields like robotics, AI, and industrial engineering. She advocated for an integrated, collaborative approach to technical education across countries to avoid isolated development and create a stronger, more sustainable innovation pipeline. Ms. Goba stressed that sustainable development in Africa hinges on skills alignment with technological advancement.

Mr. Segunfunmi Olajide - Vice Chair-Elect, ICANN Business Constituency; CEO, Heritech Consulting, called attention to Africa's critical moment: either to lead sustainable innovation or continue lagging. He underscored the continent's youth population as a catalyst for change and reiterated that emerging technologies can solve major continental challenges. However, he emphasized ethical tech use, ensuring fairness, data protection, and transparency. He encouraged African countries to harmonize policies, localize innovation, and push for more private-public collaboration. Mr. Olajide also highlighted the need for community-based solutions and encouraged cross-border cooperation to build Africa-led frameworks for responsible technology adoption.

Engr. Mohamed Hosny - COO, Huawei Africa Region (Digital Transformation). Engr. Hosny spotlighted how China's and UAE's use of AI in weather forecasting and rainfall enhancement can be replicated in Africa. He explained Huawei's Pangu AI, which has significantly improved typhoon predictions using fewer resources and with greater accuracy than traditional models. These innovations have enabled faster disaster response, ultimately saving lives. He argued that Africa must improve access to funding, AI infrastructure, and research partnerships to harness such tools. Engr. Hosny concluded by reinforcing the need for Africa to invest in AI to address climate risks and strengthen early warning systems.

Mr. Waddah Fadul - Founder & President, Institute of Tomorrow. Mr. Fadul emphasized that emerging technologies, such as AI, blockchain, and IoT, can significantly improve agriculture, wildlife conservation, water use, and more. He pointed to innovations like blockchain-powered agricultural exports and smart cities as examples. However, he cautioned that Africa must not ignore the environmental risks of tech, including e-waste, overconsumption of energy, and extraction of rare minerals. He proposed a unified continental framework that promotes responsible innovation, eliminates duplication, and fosters regional cooperation to share knowledge and drive green development.

3.	Africa CIO Award	5. Mr. Adesegun Orafidiya , CIO & Head of Information & Digital Technology, British America Tobacco from Nigeria.
4.	Africa ICT Innovation Award	6. Dr. Amos Obi , CEO of Hetaved Skills Academy for Innovations and Entrepreneurship, Nigeria, 7. Ms. Grace Kaimburi , Research Associate - Climate and AI, Kenya, and Mr. Mohammed Omara, Founder & CEO/CTO, Hoopoe Digital
5.	Africa Community Development Award	8. Dr. Kossi Amessinou , Doctor, Information and Communication Sciences, Benin 9. Ms. Hoda Dahroug , Advisor to the Minister for Digital Community Development MCIT, Egypt 10. Mr Alphonse Odhiambo , Network and Infrastructure Services Engineer from Kenya.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 Recommendations

Some of the Key Action Points and Recommendations from the Summit are:

Session 1: Improving Digital Infrastructure Development Towards a Smart Africa: Whose Responsibility?

1. Enforce IPv6 adoption and compliance in licensing, particularly for IoT and cloud infrastructure.
2. Mandate geographic equity in broadband rollout and encourage infrastructure sharing among providers.
3. Leverage regional bodies like WACREN to broaden cooperative Internet and digital policy frameworks.

Session 2: Bridging Digital Divides through Digital Literacy and Skills

1. Support community-led digital literacy initiatives through localized models and government endorsement.
2. Scale inclusive national programs like 3MTT and NIRA Academy to rural and underserved populations.
3. Facilitate community demand aggregation platforms for civic advocacy around digital inclusion.

Session 3: (Fostering Digital Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Sustainable Business Growth)

1. Promote digitization of African cultural identity and support platforms preserving local languages.
2. Embed digital skills, AI, and cybersecurity into school curricula and community learning centers.
3. Expand public-private-academic collaboration to co-design innovation ecosystems and service delivery.
4. Encourage startups to build policy-relevant innovations, especially in AgriTech, RegTech, and cybersecurity.
5. Promote digitization of African cultural identity and support platforms preserving local languages.

Session 4: Addressing Cybersecurity Challenges, Data Privacy Issues and other Delays in Digitalization

1. For Governments & Regulators: Ratify and Domesticize the Malabo Convention: Encourage parliamentary engagement to ensure regional data frameworks are adopted.
2. Develop Annual Operational Plans: Tie cybersecurity objectives to national development goals and budget frameworks.
3. Strengthen Enforcement: Train regulatory and security agencies on new threat models and enforcement strategies.
4. Launch National Awareness Campaigns: Allocate specific budget lines for public cybersecurity education and digital safety in schools and SMEs.
5. For the Private Sector: Upskill DPOs and IT Teams: Invest in ongoing training and certifications for in-house compliance officers and cybersecurity leads.
6. Engage in PPPs: Join forces with government bodies to co-create effective security standards and responses.
7. Participate in Policy Dialogues: Ensure business representation in continental and global policy discussions like the IGF and AU initiatives.
8. For Civil Society & Academia: Promote Digital Literacy: Host bootcamps, webinars, and workshops for marginalized and underserved groups.
9. Youth and Women Inclusion: Advocate for inclusion of diverse voices in policy formulation and implementation.
10. Community Watchdog Mechanisms: Establish local reporting and monitoring hubs to track breaches, misinformation, and cybercrime.

Session 5: ICANN-BC Outreach to African Business Owners

1. Expand outreach efforts to underrepresented regions within Africa to increase awareness about new gTLD opportunities and ICANN BC membership benefits.

2. Provide capacity-building workshops and resources tailored for African startups to navigate ICANN processes and technical requirements effectively.
3. Establish mentorship programs pairing experienced ICANN BC members with new African applicants to support successful domain applications and policy advocacy.
4. Advocate for localized policies and support mechanisms that address specific African challenges such as DNS abuse, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure gaps.
5. Maintain continuous communication channels, including regular webinars and updates, to keep the African business community informed and engaged on ICANN developments.

Session 6: Adopting Emerging Technologies and Addressing its Effect on Environment and Climate

1. Empower Ethical and Sustainable Tech Use: Establish environmental KPIs in tech deployment strategies. Enforce ethical standards for AI and emerging technologies, ensuring transparency, data privacy, and accountability.
2. Strengthen the Digital Skills Ecosystem: Scale technical education in AI, robotics, and green tech. Align curricula with market and environmental needs.
3. Foster Regional and Continental Collaboration: Create inter-country platforms for knowledge sharing and policy alignment. Promote cross-border synergies to reduce redundant efforts and accelerate shared progress.
4. Bridge Policy Gaps: Encourage inclusive dialogue between government, private sector, civil society, and academia. Localize African tech frameworks within national contexts while aligning with continental objectives.
5. Localize and Decentralize Innovation: Empower grassroots innovation hubs to solve local problems with emerging technologies. Support community-led solutions that reflect Africa's unique environmental and cultural contexts.
6. Invest in AI for Climate Action - Adopt AI-powered forecasting models to improve climate resilience. Use AI in water management, agriculture, early warning systems, and e-waste reduction.
7. Enhance Access to Climate-Tech Funding - Support startups and research projects with grants, venture capital, and public funding. Encourage financial institutions to prioritize climate-resilient innovations.
8. Build Public-Private Partnerships - Promote coordinated efforts between industry and government for technology deployment. Create incentives for private sector engagement in green innovation and sustainability.
10. Support African-led digital research and promote media-driven storytelling to scale proven models.
11. Foster Regional and Continental Collaboration
12. Expand outreach efforts to underrepresented regions within Africa to increase awareness about new gTLD opportunities and ICANN BC membership benefits.

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