



Official Communiqué: 26th AfGGWG Meeting at AIS 2023

Johannesburg, South Africa – 29 September 2023

Under the aegis of Mr Venceslas Katimba, Chairperson of the AFRINIC Government Working Group (AfGGWG), African government representatives convened for the 26th AfGGWG Meeting on 29 September 2023 at the Indaba Hotel, Johannesburg. This paramount discussion occurred alongside the Africa Internet Summit 2023 (AIS'23) held from 26-30 September 2023 at the same venue.

This meeting, which convened from 09:00 to 12:30 UTC+2, brought together African Governments, Regulators, and Law Enforcement Authorities to deliberate on the profound challenges currently afflicting AFRINIC. The focus of the discussion centred on:

- Taking note of the situation of AFRINIC, especially the Appointment of an Official Receiver for AFRINIC by the Honourable Judge of The Bankruptcy Division of the Supreme Court of Mauritius on 12 September 2023, which is tasked with overseeing the election process in accordance with AFRINIC's constitution, facilitating the formation of a proper board within a six-month timeframe starting from September 12, 2023. In case of any delays, the receiver can seek an extension through legal channels, and appointing a Chief Executive Officer.
- Noting that the Official Receiver is tasked with ensuring that the status quo of the assets of AFRINIC are preserved and that the value of the business is maintained.
- Charting a proactive path to address operational and governance challenges is essential to ensure the successful continuation of African digital transformation initiatives.
- Understanding the vital role that governments must play in AFRINIC's governance structure to ensure uninterrupted access to Internet number resources is crucial for developing the Internet in Africa.

Following these significant discussions, the delegates assert the following:

1. **Unwavering Commitment to AFRINIC:** The AfGWG recognises the pivotal role of AFRINIC in the continent's digital transformation journey. Thus, they express their unwavering commitment to supporting AFRINIC in navigating the current challenges and ensuring it remains a robust institution.
2. **Immediate Redressal of AFRINIC's Challenges:** The African Government Working Group supports interventions to fill the leadership vacuum at AFRINIC. This will entail support to the AFRINIC Official Receiver in order to ensure the continued operations of AFRINIC and that the upcoming election of the Board of Directors scheduled at any time as decided by the Official Receiver is conducted transparently and fairly, which will lead to a fully functioning Board of Directors and the recruitment of a capable CEO to facilitate the continuous operations of the organisation.
3. **Enhanced Governmental Role:** Recognizing Internet resources' inherent value and impact in the continent's growth, the AfGWG emphasises their intention to play a more pronounced role in AFRINIC's governance. This step is seen as essential to ensure that Internet number resources are protected, managed, and allocated in a manner that prioritises the continent's best interests. To this end, the African governments will direct their respective representatives to actively engage in the AFRINIC Government Working Group and the AFRINIC Policy Development Process. They will also support the candidacy of any government representative vying for a position in the AFRINIC Board election. This approach ensures that governmental perspectives and requirements for IP numbers are effectively represented and considered during policy-making.
4. **Commitment to Internet Development:** the AfGWG reaffirms their commitment to developing the Internet in Africa and given the pivotal role that AFRINIC plays in this regard, , remain dedicated to supporting initiatives that enhance Internet accessibility, affordability, and security on the continent.
5. **Oversight and Accountability:** the AFRINIC Government Working Group stress the importance of robust oversight and accountability mechanisms within AFRINIC's governance structure. Transparency and good governance practices are essential to building trust and ensuring the effective functioning of the organisation.
6. **Building Trust and Collaboration:** It's acknowledged that for AFRINIC to flourish and deliver on its mandate, all stakeholders must have a trust-based relationship. The AfGWG calls for enhanced collaboration and open communication channels among governments, regulators, AFRINIC, and the broader Internet community.

In conclusion, the African governments representatives present at the 26th AfGWG Meeting express relentless commitment to address the challenges facing AFRINIC collaboratively. AfGWG believe that, with collective efforts and a spirit of unity, the continent can surmount these challenges and continue its path of digital transformation, empowering every African in the process.

End of Communiqué