In collaboration with the African Union Commission

Conclusions of the workshop on the Best Practices for the establishment and management of Internet Exchange Points in The Gambia

Banjul – The Gambia
Kairaba Hotel

16 to 18 October 2012
I. INTRODUCTION

The Government of The Gambia recognizes the promotion of ICT for socio-economic development and it is within this context that it adopted a National Information and Infrastructure (NICI) Policy, Strategies and Plans in 2004 as the blueprint for the development of the Information and Communication Technologies.

In collaboration with the African Union Commission, the Ministry of Information and Communication infrastructure (MOICI) hosted an IXP best practices workshop from 16 to 18 October 2012, in Banjul, at the Kairaba Beach Hotel.

II. OBJECTIVE

The aim of the workshop is to reach a mutual agreement among participants to work towards the establishment of a local Internet Exchange Point (IXP) in The Gambia.

III. CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

The Ministry in charge of the ICT with the technical and financial support of the African Union Commission and the Internet Society (ISOC) organized this workshop to support the establishment of an IXP in The Gambia.

The following organizations participated in the workshop:


Only one ISP (Lanix) was absent.

*The list of participants is hereby attached in annex.*
The opening ceremony comprised of speeches from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure, the ICT Expert, African Union Commission and the Internet Society (ISOC).

Currently, Africa is paying overseas carriers to exchange “local” (continental) traffic. This is both costly as well as an inefficient way of handling inter-country exchange of Internet traffic.

An Internet Exchange Point (IXP) is a neutral physical infrastructure whose purpose is to facilitate the exchange of Internet traffic between different Internet Service Providers (ISPs) within a given territory, thereby keeping local Internet traffic local to that territory.

It allows, among other things:

- Optimization of Internet Traffic;
- The improvement of the connections, quality, reduction of latency and limitation of interruption effects of the international cables on the local traffic;
- Increased security of local traffic by avoiding its transit via countries that are outside the national jurisdiction.

The participants welcomed the initiative of the African Internet Exchange Point System project (AXIS) by the African Union with the financial support from the European Union-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund with one of its objectives to support Member States to establish Internet Exchange Points.

IV. WORKSHOP PROCESS

The three days workshop, conducted by an expert from ISOC allowed participants to reinforce their technical and legal knowledge on the establishment and management of an IXP. The workshop activities highlighted the importance of an IXP in the improvement of the quality of the Internet services provision in The Gambia.

Under the facilitation of the workshop facilitator, the participants examined the essential challenges in relation to the establishment and management of this infrastructure at the national level. These included the choice of the legal and management structure, and the location to host the IXP.

During the workshop, the participating organizations agreed to establish a working committee for the establishment of the IXP. The main responsibilities of the Working Committee will include, but not limited to:
• Developing a draft Constitution,
• Legal modalities for the IXP

The Working Committee consists of volunteers from the workshop participants to ensure continuity. The membership included the following:

• Lamin Camara (MOICI) - Facilitator
• Beran Dondeh Gillen (ITAG) – Co-Facilitator
• Abdoulie Sowe (Lasting Solutions)
• Nicholas Jatta (PURA)
• Isatou Jah (QCell)
• Robert Kioko (Unique Solutions)
• Gabriel Latjor Ndow (ISOC)
• Jalamang Jobarteh (Nifty ICT Solutions)
• Seedy Bensouda (InSIST Global)

The Working Committee will be supported by a legal adviser.

The following recommendations were also made:

• The GAMTEL Serekunda Exchange Point was identified by consensus, as the preferred location for the IXP, followed by the Submarine Landing Station and then QCell HQ.
• The organizational structure should be lean, comprising a Board, CEO, and three (3) other positions, namely, Technical, Finance and Administration.
• The model proposed by consensus was the Independent IXP Business Model.
• The multi-lateral peering and ultimately transitioning to a hybrid model.
• The regulator will expedite the necessary legal and regulatory environment for the setting up of the IXP.
• Participation to the IXP should be open, based on certain technical requirements to be determined.
Participating organisations pledged to contribute seed funds for the establishment of the IXP. Participants further invited MOICI and PURA to support and contribute to the process, and consolidate other on-going activities relevant to the establishment of the IXP.

The participants extended their vote of thanks to the Ministry, the African Union Commission and the Internet Society.

Done in Banjul, The Gambia on October 18, 2012