
The Internet Society and African Union Commission Survey on African ICT Policy Makers

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Disclaimer: The opinions, findings and conclusions in this report reflect the views of the survey participants and not necessarily those of the African Union Commission and Internet Society.



Introduction

The African Regional Bureau of Internet Society and the African Union Commission (AUC) have conducted a survey on African ICT Policymakers, during the 1st ordinary meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Communication and ICT of the African Union in September 2015. Focusing on African Policymakers priorities on Information and Communication Technologies and Internet issues, the survey mainly aims at identifying African Policymakers' key issues of interest as well as recognizing their main concerns and topics of discussions.

While bringing more understanding of ICT and Internet policy issues in Africa, this report provides an overview of the survey's key findings, which are believed, will help the Internet Society and the African Union as well as other actors to target their efforts towards the need of the policy makers.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

- ✓ **African ICT policymakers participate reasonably well at local Internet related forums but less at regional and international levels**
- ✓ **52% of African ICT Policy Makers believe that open Internet is very important**
- ✓ **Infrastructure development is the topmost priority of ICT African Policy makers**
- ✓ **Connectivity, Cyber-security and Access are the top three Internet-related topics closely monitored by African ICT policy makers in the past year**
- ✓ **There will be a shift of priority in the next three years since Cyber Security, Data protection & privacy, and connectivity should be the next priorities**

Key Findings

About African ICT Policy Makers

The majority of African ICT policy makers (79%) give adequate attention to Internet related issues since 46% respondents rated the amount of attention given by local policymakers to Internet-related issues as being good, 21% said it is fair and 12 % said it is excellent. Only 21% believed it is poor or very poor. (Chart 1)

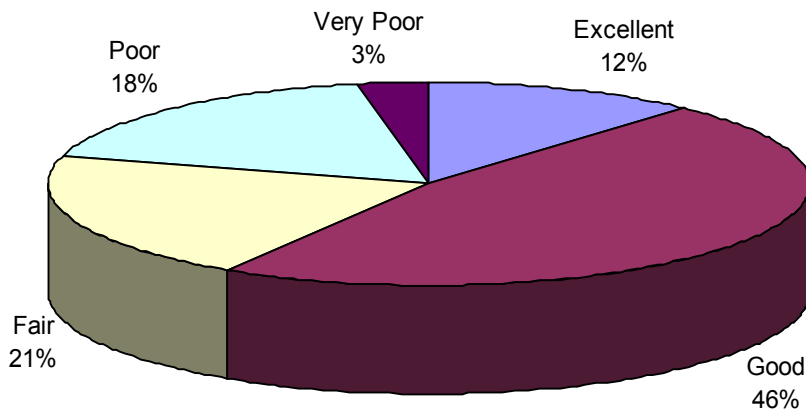


Chart 1- Attention given by African ICT policymakers to Internet-related issues

With regards to identifying actors dealing with Internet related issues, Ministries in charge of ICT were found to be the main players dealing with Internet issues in the African Continent at a rating of 45%, followed by Telecom regulators (32%); ICT Authority (13%) and others contributed to only 10 %. (Chart 2)

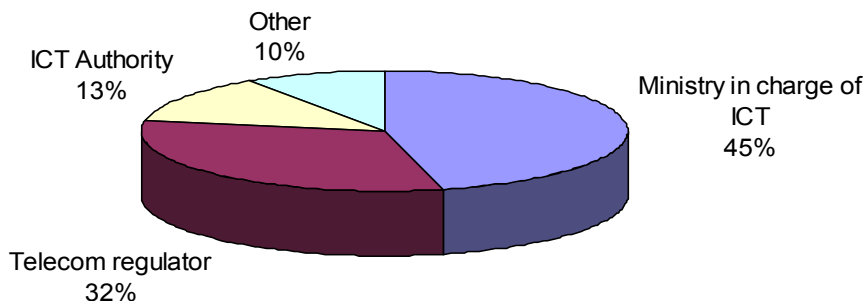


Chart 2- Main players dealing with Internet related Issues

The participation of key players around Internet issues at the national level is relatively high since 15% of the respondents have rated the key players' participation as excellent and 44% as good. Some 26% of the respondents indicated that the participation of these players to be fair while 12% and 3% of the respondents have identified the participation of the key players to be below fair and poor respectively. (Chart 3)

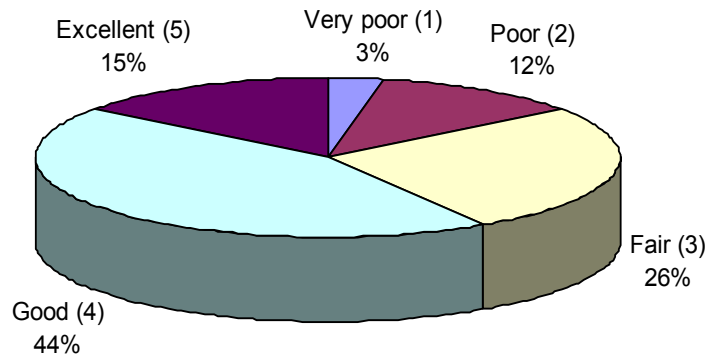


Chart 3- Participation of key players at the national level revolving around Internet Issues

The participation of the key players at regional forums is less good since only a third of participants considered it as excellent (9%) or above average (29%), whilst 29% of the respondents thought it was just fair. In addition, a third of the survey participants thought the key players participation at the regional level was poor (21%), very poor (6%) or inexistent (6%). (Chart 4)

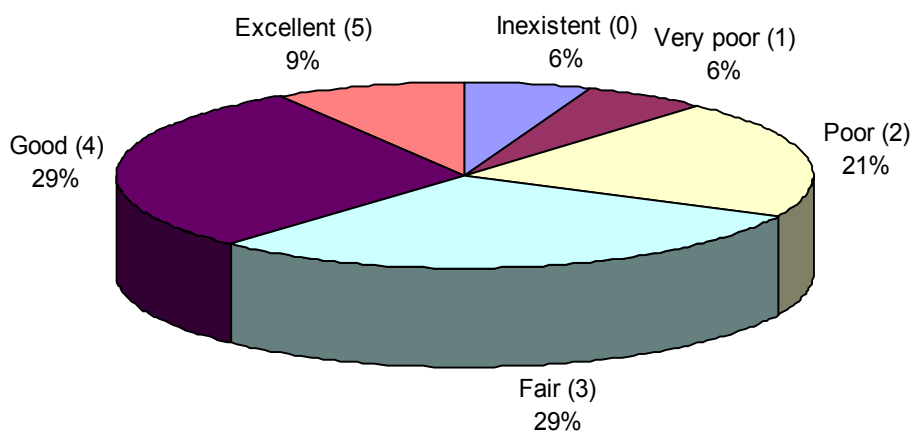


Chart 4- Participation of key players at the Regional level

The participation of the key players in international forums is even poorer since only one fourth of the respondents have rated the key players participation at a global level to be excellent (6%) or good (18%). The remaining considered it as fair (37%), poor (18%), very poor (6%) or inexistent (15%). (Chart 5)

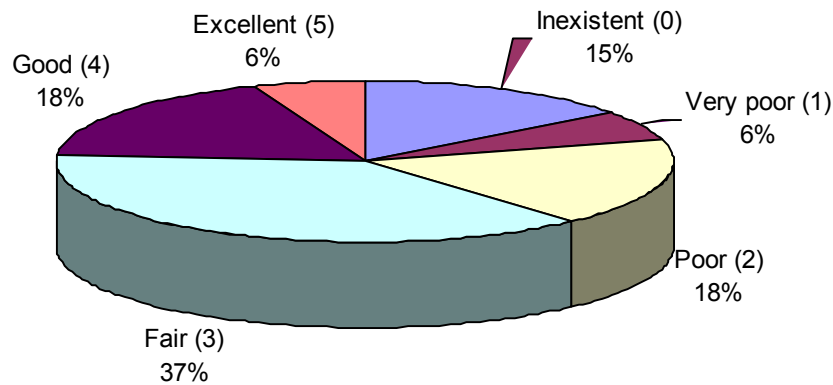


Chart 5- Participation of key players at the Global level

Notably, infrastructure development has been recognized as the main priority of respondents' organizations while Policy development has been identified to be next in line followed by the need to develop regulations and forums for Internet Governance. (Chart 6)

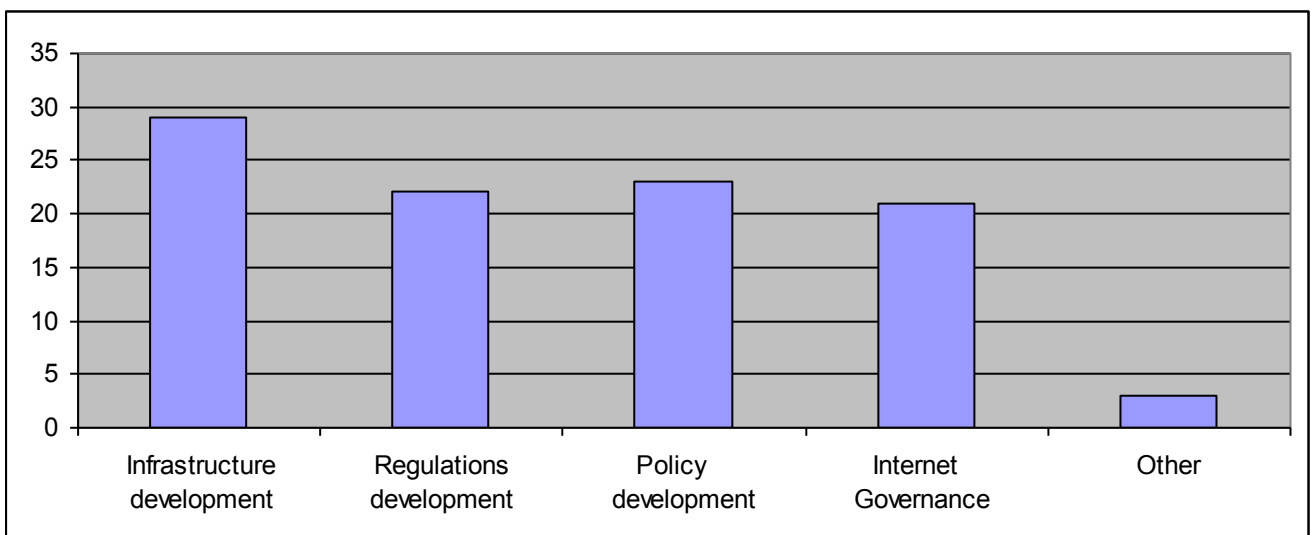


Chart 6 - Respondents' organizations priorities regarding ICT development

Priority issues for African policy makers

When asked to rate the importance given by their government to open Internet, more than half of the respondents (52%) recognized that it was very important while the other 12% and 21% thought that it was either important or somehow important respectively. It was also interesting to take note that some 15 % of the respondents felt that their governments are indifferent towards the issue of Open Internet. (Chart 7)

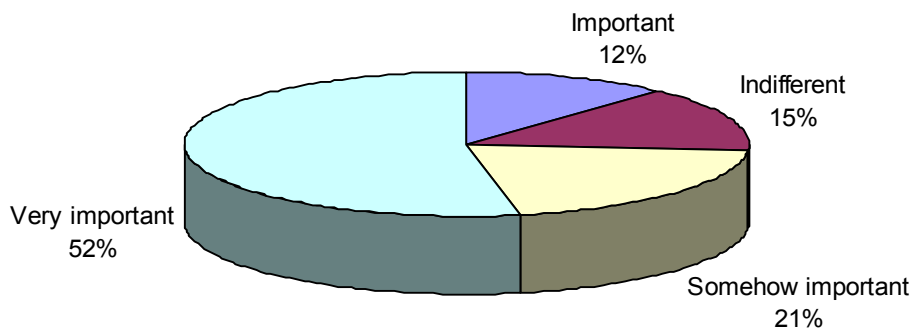


Chart 7- Importance of Open Internet for governments

Connectivity, Cyber-security and Access, Data Protection and privacy, and E-commerce are the top 5 topics that are closely monitored by respondents' organizations. Whereas Local content, Online behavior and code of conduct, Standards, Internet Economy as well as Cross-Border and multilateral treaties on cyberspace have been identified as the topics to be the least followed by the respondents' organizations. (Chart 8)

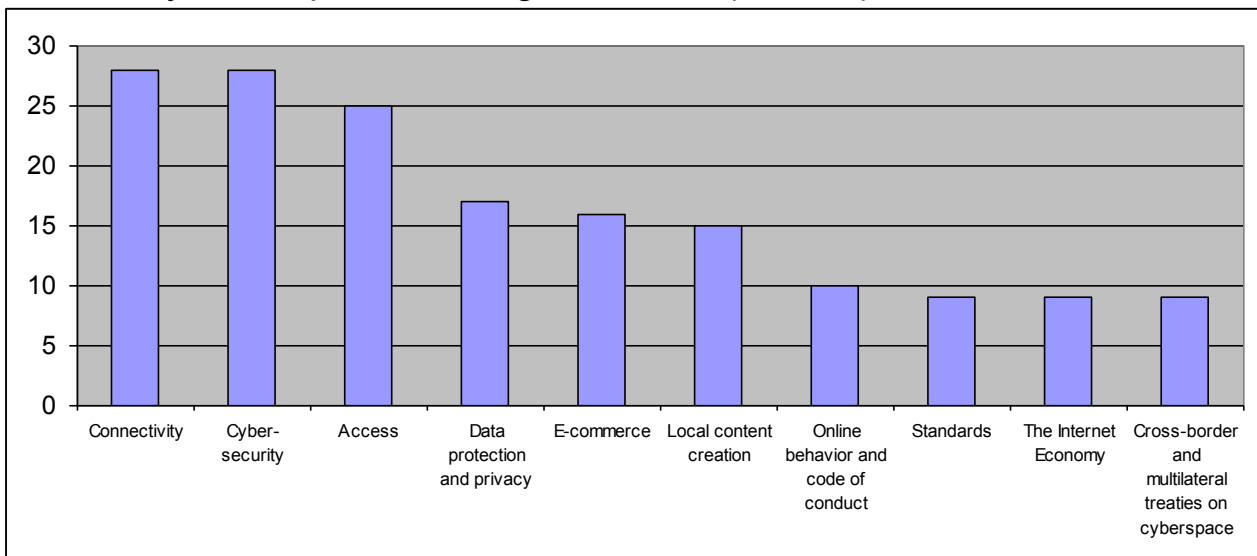


Chart 8 - Internet-related topics closely monitored in the past year by respondents' organization

The respondents however acknowledge that there will be a shift of priority in the next years since they consider that Cyber Security, Data protection and privacy, connectivity, Access and E-Commerce are the five most important topics over the next years. The survey further revealed that Local content creation, Cloud computing, Critical Infrastructure Resilience, Internet Economy and Freedom of expression were identified to be important but with less priority. (Chart 9)

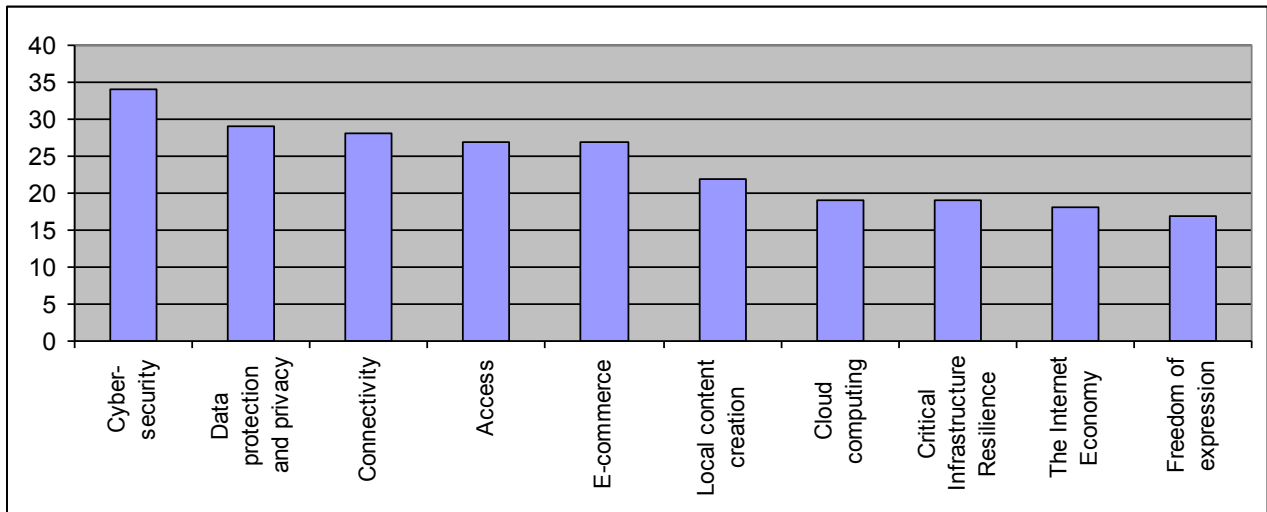


Chart 9- Topics important over the next 3 years, based on observations of the current Internet landscape

Methodology

The survey was conducted online from the 31st of August up to the 2nd of September 2015, using the Survey Monkey platform. Link to the survey platform was provided for the African ICT Policy makers who attended the 1st ordinary meeting of the STC on Communication and ICT of the African Union.

The poll was administered in both French and English languages and comprised of sixteen questions.

Survey participants

This survey was completed by the African ICT Policy makers who attended the 1st ordinary meeting of the STC on Communication and ICT of the African Union. The Policy makers who represented governmental institutions are nationalities of twenty different African countries covering the 5 regions of the continent.

Close to one third of the respondents are residents of East Africa (32%) whilst 29% come from West Africa, 21% from Central Africa and 15% from Southern Africa. Only 3% of the respondents coming from the North African participated in the survey. (Chart 10)

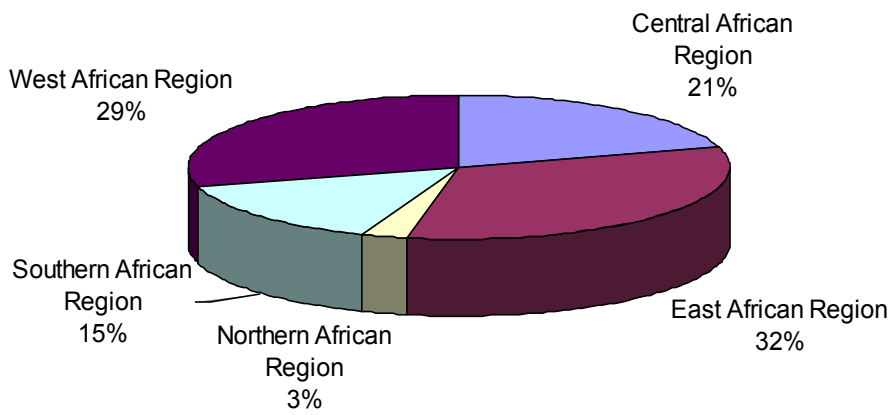


Chart 10 - Survey participation by Region

According to the data collected, half (50%) of the respondents are from Ministries in charge of ICT while 12 % are Telecom Regulators and close to one third are from other organizations including Government institutions in charge of Telecommunications, Postal services, Communications and Cyber security. (Chart 11)

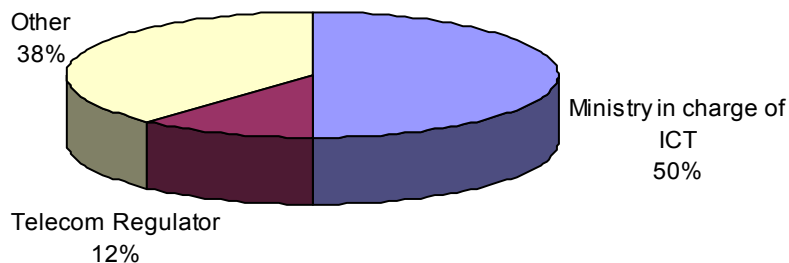


Chart 11- Survey participation by Organization

The significant majority of the respondents' (94%) awareness of regional related issues is average or above. When asked to rate their awareness with regard to Regional Internet related issues more than half believed it was Excellent (9%) or High (44%), while a third of the respondents thought their awareness were Moderate (41%). Only 9% of the survey participants rated their knowledge on the issue as being poor. (Chart 12)

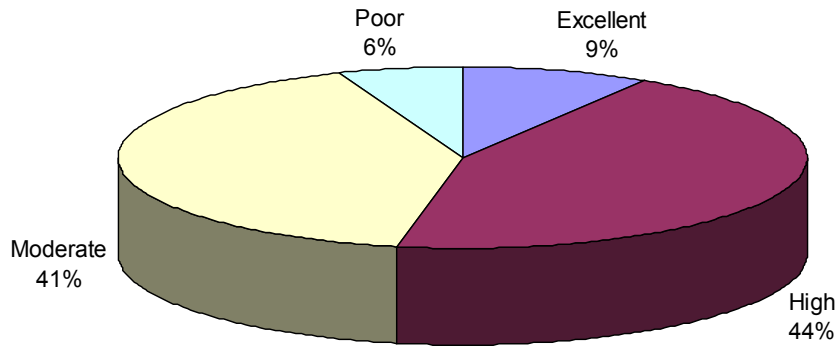


Chart 12- Awareness of regional Internet-related issues

Conclusion

The results of the Internet Society and African Union Commission (AUC) Survey on African ICT Policy makers show that the main players in the continent dealing with Internet Issues are Ministries in charge of ICT and Telecom regulators. The participation of key players dealing with Internet issues in national forums is good, but their participation decreases substantially at regional level and even more at international level.

The survey shows that most African Governments give importance to Open Internet, which shows that Africans are committed to protect the core principles of the Internet as the rest of the world.

Infrastructure development, Regulations and Policy development as well as Internet Governance have been identified as major priorities by the respondents' organizations with regards to ICT development.

While Connectivity, Cyber-security and Access are the top three topics that are closely monitored by African policy makers in the past year, others topics such Data protection and privacy, E-commerce and local content have also been given ample attention. Moreover, based on observations of the current Internet landscape, it was the view of the respondents that Cyber-security, Data Protection and privacy, Connectivity will be the most important topics over the next three years.

This survey shows the main priorities of African ICT policy makers with regards to Internet policy. It is hoped that the findings will help actors interested in supporting policy makers in this area to focus their activities along those priorities for the benefit of the development of Internet in Africa.