



Friday, May 22, 2026

KEYNOTE REMARKS

BY

**HONORABLE SAM GEORGE, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATION, DIGITAL
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION, AT THE PRESS BRIEFING AND
INAUGURATION OF THE AFIGF 2026
LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE (LOC)**

MoCDTI, Accra

Distinguished Representatives of Government Institutions,
Representative of the United Nations Internet Governance Forum Secretariat (UN IGF),
Geneva,
Representatives of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA),
Representatives of the African Union Commission (AUC),
Members of the Africa IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG),
Distinguished Development Partners,
Members of the Technical Community, Private Sector, Civil Society, Academia, Youth
Representatives, and the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

It is my honour to welcome you all to the official launch of Ghana's preparations to host the **15th Africa Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF) 2026**.

Ghana proudly hosts this important continental forum here in Accra from **2nd to 5th November 2026**, under the theme: ***"Advancing Africa's Digital Future Through Innovation, Inclusion, and Trust."***

This theme is not merely a title. It speaks directly to the defining realities and opportunities confronting our continent. Across Africa, digital technologies are reshaping economies, governance, education, trade, and daily life. Artificial Intelligence, digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, data governance, and platform regulation are no longer peripheral concerns — they are central to Africa's development, competitiveness, and digital sovereignty.

As Africa advances its digital transformation agenda under frameworks such as Agenda 2063, the WSIS+20 Process, and the Global Digital Compact, one critical question confronts us all: **How do we ensure that Africa's digital future is shaped by African priorities, African values, and African aspirations?**

This is precisely why the Africa Internet Governance Forum matters.

The AfIGF remains Africa's premier multistakeholder platform for dialogue, collaboration, and policy exchange on Internet and digital governance. It brings together governments, parliamentarians, regional institutions, civil society, academia, the technical community, the private sector, youth, and development partners — all as equal stakeholders — united by a shared commitment to building an inclusive, secure, and trusted digital future for the continent.

Over the past fourteen years, the Africa IGF has played a significant role in advancing continental conversations on meaningful connectivity, digital inclusion, cybersecurity, online safety, human rights online, and emerging technologies. Most importantly, it has steadily strengthened Africa's collective voice in global digital governance.

Distinguished Guests, the 15th edition of the Africa IGF comes at a **particularly strategic moment**. The Global Internet Governance Forum 2026 is scheduled to take place in Nairobi, Kenya. AfIGF 2026, therefore, presents a timely and important opportunity for Africa to deepen coordination, consolidate continental priorities, and project a stronger, more unified voice on the world stage.

The Forum will amplify Africa's visibility in global digital governance discussions; promote greater alignment on digital policy priorities; showcase African innovation and best practices; and foster strategic partnerships that accelerate our continent's digital transformation.

The Forum will also continue advancing conversations around trusted, inclusive, and people-centred digital ecosystems, with deliberate focus on meaningful participation for youth, women, and underserved communities.

This year's Forum will be anchored around **eight key thematic areas** that reflect both the opportunities and the challenges shaping Africa's digital landscape:

Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies; Digital Inclusion and Meaningful Connectivity; Cybersecurity and Digital Trust; Gender and Youth Inclusion in Digital Governance; Human Rights, Online Safety and Platform Governance; Climate Change and Digital Sustainability; Data Governance; and the pursuit of a Unified African Digital Identity.

These themes will guide our discussions, shape our partnerships, and drive the policy dialogue and cooperation that AfIGF 2026 will catalyse.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Ghana is fully committed to using digital technologies to drive sustainable development, innovation, and inclusive economic growth.

Under the leadership of **His Excellency President John Dramani Mahama**, Ghana is championing a bold digital transformation agenda — one that recognises technology not merely as a national development tool, but as a **strategic enabler of Africa's economic integration and continental progress**.

The President's vision is clear: digital technology must become a key driver of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). A truly integrated African market cannot be achieved without robust digital infrastructure, affordable connectivity, trusted digital ecosystems, interoperable payment systems, secure cross-border data flows, and innovation-driven trade facilitation.

Central to this vision is the development of a **Unified African Digital Identity Infrastructure** — critical for secure transactions, cross-border trade, financial inclusion, access to public services, and trusted participation in the digital economy. A harmonised, interoperable digital identity ecosystem has the potential to strengthen mobility, enhance trust in digital services, support regional integration, and unlock broader opportunities for businesses and citizens right across the continent.

Ghana believes deeply that Africa's digital transformation agenda and the AfCFTA vision are interconnected. Digitalisation can reduce trade barriers, expand opportunities for African businesses and startups, strengthen regional value chains, support e-commerce, improve financial inclusion, and enable young people and women to participate meaningfully in the continental economy.

In pursuit of this vision, Ghana continues to invest in digital public infrastructure, innovation ecosystems, digital skills development, cybersecurity, e-governance platforms, and inclusive connectivity to build a resilient, future-ready digital economy.

Distinguished Guests, we recognise that **no single government or institution can address today's digital governance challenges alone**. The future of Africa's digital transformation will depend on deeper regional collaboration, stronger institutions, and genuine multistakeholder partnerships.

It will also require placing **young people and women at the centre** of Africa's digital future. Africa is the youngest continent in the world. Our youth are not merely beneficiaries of digital transformation — they are innovators, creators, entrepreneurs, and leaders, shaping Africa's digital future in real time.

We are therefore particularly encouraged that AfIGF 2026 will be accompanied by important community-led and capacity-building initiatives, including the African School on Internet Governance, the Africa Youth IGF, the Africa Children's IGF, the Parliamentary

Track, Newcomers' Sessions, Technical Workshops, and Innovation Showcases. These initiatives are designed to strengthen inclusive participation and develop the next generation of African digital leaders.

The Forum will be delivered in a **fully hybrid format**, enabling broad participation both physically here in Accra and virtually from across Africa and the world. Simultaneous interpretation in **English, French, Arabic, and Swahili** will ensure meaningful engagement across our diverse linguistic communities.

And a defining feature of AfIGF 2026 will be the deliberate and active engagement of the **business community**. Telecommunications operators, fintech companies, startups, infrastructure providers, investors, and technology innovators all play a critical role in advancing Africa's digital transformation. We look forward to a Forum that is inclusive, forward-looking, and action-oriented — one capable of translating dialogue into practical cooperation, partnerships, and policy outcomes that benefit our people and our continent.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Ghana wishes to acknowledge the invaluable role of the **Africa IGF Secretariat**, hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the **AfIGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group** for their continued coordination and institutional leadership. We also thank the UN IGF Secretariat, the African Union Commission, development partners, and the wider Internet governance community, whose collective efforts continue to strengthen this important continental platform.

On behalf of the Government of Ghana, I express our sincere appreciation to all partners and stakeholders who are supporting the organisation of AfIGF 2026. Ghana reaffirms its full commitment to working with all of you to deliver a successful, impactful, and memorable Forum.

Distinguished Guests, as we officially commence preparations today, it is my honour to formally **inaugurate the Local Organising Committee for the Africa Internet Governance Forum 2026.**

I encourage every member of this Committee, and all our stakeholders, to work together in the true spirit of collaboration, inclusivity, and African solidarity — to deliver a Forum that reflects Africa's shared digital aspirations and leaves a lasting legacy for our continent.

Ghana looks forward to welcoming Africa and the global digital community to Accra in November 2026.

Together, let us build an Africa where digital transformation advances innovation, opportunity, resilience, inclusion, and trust — **for all.**

I thank you.