

African voices to be heard loud and clear

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Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on the continent have advanced plans to send a 20-member delegation to the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in November to ensure that African voices are heard.

At a roundtable session on internet governance organised by the Open Society Institute for Southern Africa (OSISA), at the ongoing 11th annual Highway Africa conference in Grahamstown this week, CSOs resolved to ensure that Africa is not relegated at the global meeting.

IGF in Rio is being organized by the IGF Secretariat based in Geneva, Switzerland in support of the United Nations Secretary-General's mandate from the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) with regards to convening a new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue.

Speaking on behalf of the CSOs, Natasha Primo of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), said that the essence of bringing the crusade to the largest gathering of 'pen-pushers' on the continent was to guarantee that African communicators were not left out.

According to her, the session was basically to raise awareness in the participation of Africans at the IGF by having an understanding of the theme focusing on access, openness, security and critical internet resources as well as capacity/development agenda.

African CSOs, she pointed out would be sending a 20-man delegation to the global meeting to "Get African voices heard on the capacity and development agenda. We must make ourselves heard in all the themes."

She added that the CSOs presently want to continue the crusade online in order to develop shared positions for the Rio meeting with Africa at heart.

"We had a preliminary discussion and we want to take that online for further discussions," she asserted, adding that those interested should contact OSISA.

The online discussion would kick off on September 15 and that it's an open invitation to organizations and individuals to join hands with CSOs to make certain the aim is achieved.

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