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An African Inter-Governmental Coordination and Cooperation for a Safer Internet

Cybercrime and security is a growing concern, a priority, and hot topic today for law enforcement as well as the Internet technical community. Realising the importance of collectively addressing this issue, AfriNIC has established the AfriNIC Government Working Group (AfGWG) initiative with the first round table for Law Enforcement Agencies on the theme of “*African Inter-Governmental Coordination and Cooperation for a Safer Internet*” which took place 25 – 26 January 2010, at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, Cyber City, Mauritius. There were thirty-five (35) delegates from eleven (11) countries representing government officials who are responsible for law enforcement and cyber security in Africa, the Council of Europe, the US Department of Justice/Federal Bureau of Investigations, ICANN/IANA, and other RIR organisations. QCC Information Security Ltd (Mauritius) was a sponsor of the social event.

This event is the first step in AfriNIC’s strategy to improve its cooperation and support to governments in their quest to better understand the Internet governance ecosystem and positively contribute to policy discussions and matters that are of their interest. “If we want the Internet to be a safer place for business and a tool that can foster Socio-Economical Development in Africa, we need to better understand the Economics of the Internet and create a broad and participative cooperation where each party and stakeholder play their role for efficient policies and collaborative frameworks to fight cybercrime,” said Mr. Adiel Akplogan the CEO of AfriNIC.

During this two-day event, the participants discussed current challenges with Internet-related crimes; steps being taken by law enforcement agencies; ways in which these challenges manifest in their respective countries and potential efforts to combat such challenges; ideas to promote security by facilitating global cooperation and coordination; insight into the Internet Ecosystem and its governance; how cooperating with existing organisations such as AfriNIC can impact the work of Law Enforcement Agencies; and, National CERT (Computer Emergency Readiness Team) Programs implemented in the African region.

Feedback from most of the participants was very positive, such as from Mrs. Farida Waziri, Chairperson of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Nigeria, who stated, “It has been very informative. Glad to be in Mauritius, though it was a technical meeting, I have been able to pick and learn many things. I am concerned about the level of crime in Nigeria and this kind of meeting will help me takeaway information for my country and try building training in the very near future. This event really met our expectations and that is why I stayed one more day.”

The exchange of information and ideas proved to be very useful to the participants as expressed by Mrs. Pierrette Djossou Amoussou, Telecommunications Engineer, Benin’s Posts & Telecommunications Transitory Regulatory Authority, who stated, “This was a well organized event, the content was very interesting and we received desired information. We have gathered interesting information on cyber crimes and different issues from other countries. We are much concerned about cyber crimes and we will make sure that the necessary actions are taken at our level in Benin.”

The outcome of the meeting was to continue to strengthen the AfGWG and hold subsequent meetings in other African regions; to include legal entities and create a legal framework; involve universities and the younger generation in cyber crime and law enforcement efforts; and to establish a single repository for cybercrime and security in the African region. The next AfGWG Cyber Crime/Law Enforcement event will take place in November 2010 at the 13th AfriNIC Public Policy meeting. AfriNIC has created an open mailing list for the exchange of cyber security information, subscribe by sending a request with your name, title, organisation, and, email to contact@afrinic.net and include afwg-discuss in the subject line. Presentations from this event are available at <http://meeting.afrinic.net/afwg/index.php/workshop-agenda>.

The African Network Information Center (AfriNIC) is the Regional Internet Registry (RIR) for Africa, responsible for the distribution and management of Internet number resources throughout the African region.