REMARKS BY ABIBU RASHID NTAHIGIYE, CHAIR, AFRINIC, AT AIS'18 OPENING CEREMONY, DAKAR, SENEGAL, 7 MAY 2018.

- **Rt. Hon Mahammed DIONNE: Prime Minister, Republic of Senegal,**
- **Honourable Abdoulaye Bibi Baldé, Minister of Posts, Telecommunications and the Digital Ecosystem, Republic of Senegal (or Madame Maimouna Ndoye SECK, Minister of Tourism and Air Transport)**
- **Mr. Abdou Karim SALL, Director General, ARTP**
- **Mr. Alan Barrett, CEO, AFRINIC**
- **Dr. Nii Quaynor, Convener, AfNOG**
- **Our respected partners from the AF* institutions**
- **Meeting sponsors**
- **Distinguished Delegates,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good Morning!

It's my pleasure to speak to you and to welcome you all most cordially to the official opening of the Africa Internet Summit, 2018 here in Dakar. On behalf of the AFRINIC Board and our AF* partners, I with to thank the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and the Digital Ecosystem as well as the Regulatory Authority for Telecommunications and Post for hosting us for this year's meeting. But most of all we are honoured by the very high level delegation from the Government of the Republic of Senegal led personally by H. E. the President. We thank you for this gesture.

This is the third time our joint policy meeting is taking place in Senegal after AFRINIC-1, which was held in 2004 and AFRINIC-9, which was held in 2009. Over the last 15 years our discussions and deliberations have not only contributed to a stronger Regional Internet Registry but also a transformed environment in Africa where Internet access and its governance have improved exponentially. From relying on the very costly satellite connections for Internet access, the continent now has over 40 submarine cable systems covering over 30 countries. This has ensured over 400 million people in the continent have access and we are proud to be part of this journey.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am happy to report that AFRINIC's position in the Internet ecosystem continues to grow by day. On behalf of the AFRINIC Board I wish to thank our members and the community for the immense support that enabled us effectively discharge our duties in 2017. During this period we actively participated in over 20 meetings globally where key discussions on Internet governance, expansion and access were key.

It is important to note that business and macroeconomic governance reforms are taking root in Africa with the continent making commendable progress in governance. Further, The continent's average growth was expected to rebound to 3.4% in 2017. This conducive environment has given us more impetus to forge ahead with our quest for connecting all corners of the continent with efficient and affordable Internet. Our continued engagements with key stakeholders such as governments, ISPs, Telecos and others were focused on addressing pertinent issues such as security, content, infrastructure and affordability.

Our efforts are clearly bearing fruits. In 2017, AFRINIC entered IPv4 Exhaustion Phase 1 as defined in the Soft Landing Policy. This means that we must keep engaging with and providing support to the community for a post IPv4 era. We continued to conduct capacity building and outreach activities across the continent to champion IPv6 deployment and preparedness.

(Your Excellency)

As we work towards the goals of African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, AFRINIC has been an active participant of the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Communication and ICT. Through this forum we support actions geared towards comprehensive cyber security programs especially through our African Government Working Group, which will also be meeting at the sidelines of this conference. We have also implemented the proposal to use the DotAfrica Top Level Domain as recommended by the committee in order to champion our unique African digital identity. We will also continue with our push aims to keep Africa's Internet traffic local by supporting the African Internet Exchange Systems (AXIS) Project through the robust relationships we have with the Internet Exchange Points (IXPs).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Summit therefore is a vital avenue for consistent engagement with our members, the community and other stakeholders. Most importantly, this Summit ensures collective participation in our decision making process and helps us align our mutually common goal of developing the Internet in Africa.

If you take a look at the Conference Programme, you will agree that this Conference is going to be busy and productive. There is a lot to offer for a 13-day event, which is already under way, and many of you here have participated in the capacity building workshops this past week. I would also like to thank participants, for joining us and sharing your valuable experience and ideas. It is essential to bring together experts in the field of Internet technology so that we can realise together the potential of the Internet. We are honored to have experts who I am confident will spark interesting discussions about Internet technology, players, and partnerships.

In closing, I would also like to thank our meeting sponsors, ICANN, FABs, Google, DotAfrica, and Internet Society, Sonatel and Tigo for the most valuable support for this meeting.
I hope that all of you will enjoy the Conference, and I wish all of you and especially our visitors from outside Senegal a very pleasant stay in Dakar.

Thank you.