



West African
Internet Governance
Forum 2025

West African Internet Governance Forum 2025

- ❖ **Concept Note** of West Africa Internet Governance Forum (WAIGF) 2025
- ❖ Building a ***Resilient, Inclusive, and Safe Digital Future*** for West Africa
May 22–23, 2025 (Pre-events: May 21)
- ❖ West Africa School on Internet Governance (WASIG):
May 19–21, 2025



Federal Republic
of Nigeria

For more info: Visit: <http://WAIGF.ecowas.int> or mail info@waigf.org

Background

Since its inception in 2008, the West Africa Internet Governance Forum (WAIGF) has served as a space for dialogue on Internet and digital policy across the region. Each year, WAIGF brings together policymakers, civil society, technical experts, private sector actors, researchers, and the youth to address both long-standing and emerging digital issues.

WAIGF 2025 is being hosted by the **Government of Nigeria**, with the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) serving as the national host organization. The forum is organized with the support of the ECOWAS Commission, Internet Society, ICANN, Smart Africa, and a network of national and regional partners.

WAIGF 2024, held in Dakar, Senegal, welcomed over 1,000 participants (476 onsite and 540 online), explored the impact of disruptive technologies, and contributed to regional and global digital policy debates. WAIGF 2025 builds on this momentum and aligns itself with major international processes such as:

- The WSIS+20 Review, marking two decades since the World Summit on the Information Society
- The Global Digital Compact (GDC), an initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General
- The Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on cybersecurity
- The global roadmap toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030

Purpose of WAIGF 2025

WAIGF 2025 will convene stakeholders from across West Africa and beyond to reflect on how the region can collectively strengthen its digital foundations. The forum will serve as a platform for open discussions, practical learning, and knowledge exchange across multiple dimensions of Internet governance.

This year's theme calls for a focus on digital resilience, inclusion, and safety—three dimensions that are increasingly interlinked as the region deepens its engagement with digital technologies.

Participants will have the opportunity to engage directly with current developments shaping Internet policy at local, regional, and global levels.

The forum aims to host 500 in-person attendees in Nigeria, with an additional 1,000 online participants expected to join from across the region and internationally.

Structure of the Forum

WAIGF 2025 will include the following key segments:



Main Forum: May 22–23 – Featuring plenaries, parallel sessions, and interactive formats.

Pre-events: May 21 – Including the West Africa Youth IGF and other community-organized sessions.

West Africa School on Internet Governance (WASIG): **May 19–21** – A three-day capacity-building program for emerging digital leaders. This year, with the support of ECOWAS professionals, participants will work collaboratively to improve a draft document.

Parliamentary Track: Concurrent discussions and sessions involving Members of Parliament from West African countries, focusing on legal, regulatory, and legislative matters related to the digital ecosystem.

Sub-Themes

1. Enhancing Digital Resilience

This track will cover issues related to cybersecurity, data protection, misinformation, and online safety.

Participants will explore ways to build trust in digital services, reinforce technical infrastructure, and respond to evolving security threats.

2. Digital Public Infrastructure, Policy Harmonization, and Global Cooperation

Sessions will address policy coherence across borders, interoperability of digital systems, and the development of inclusive governance frameworks. Contributions will be informed by the WSIS+20 review, the GDC process, and regional digital transformation strategies.

3. AI, Data Governance, and Innovation for Development

This theme will tackle AI adoption, data governance, and how innovation can support economic and social development. The discussions will touch on national AI strategies, ethical use of emerging technologies, and the role of data in public service delivery.

Submission of Proposals

WAIGF 2025 invites proposals for sessions, workshops, and presentations across its sub-themes. Proposals should aim to spark dialogue, present practical solutions, and connect to ongoing regional or international processes.

- Formats: Panel discussions, workshops, roundtables, research presentations, fireside chats, lightning talks
- Duration: 60–90 minutes
- Languages: English or French
- Call for Proposals Open: March 19, 2025
- Deadline: April 6, 2025
- Submission Link: https://sessionize.com/CfS_waigf_2025/
- Sponsorship & Support: Email info@waigf.org

Each proposal must include a session title, objective, format, list of proposed speakers or moderators, and a description of the interactive elements to be used.

Participation

The forum is open to all stakeholders engaged or interested in digital policy and Internet governance in West Africa. Expected participants include:

- Policymakers and government agencies
- Civil society groups and rights-based organizations
- Academic and research institutions
- Private sector and digital innovators
- Technical community and infrastructure providers
- Regional bodies (e.g., ECOWAS, Smart Africa, WATRA, UEMOA)
- Parliamentarians and legislative experts
- Youth leaders and underrepresented groups

Outcomes

WAIGF 2025 will generate a summary report capturing key insights, recommendations, and perspectives shared during the forum. This report will feed into the African IGF (AfIGF), the global UN IGF, and related regional policy consultations. It will also contribute to building a regional voice in processes like WSIS+20, the GDC, and SDG follow-up mechanisms.

Documentation will include video recordings, policy briefs, and translated highlights in English and French to ensure wide accessibility and regional reach.

About West African School on Internet Governance (WASIG) 2025

The 8th West African School on Internet Governance (WASIG) will be held from May 19 to 21, 2025, in Nigeria, as a fully residential and intensive learning program. The school is designed to build a strong foundation in Internet governance principles, digital policy development, and multi-stakeholder participation. It offers a unique environment where about 30 selected participants from across the region come together to explore critical issues shaping the digital landscape in West Africa and beyond.

The purpose of WASIG 2025 is to deepen participants' understanding of Internet governance through interactive sessions, case studies, and expert-led discussions. A key feature of this year's edition is the collaboration with ECOWAS professionals, who will guide participants through a real-time review and improvement of a regional policy draft. This practical exercise aims to connect theoretical knowledge with policy development in action. The program will cover areas including cybersecurity, AI governance, data protection, Internet infrastructure, and regional cooperation.

WASIG 2025 expects to produce a new generation of informed, confident, and engaged digital leaders who can contribute meaningfully to policy processes at the national, regional, and global levels. By the end of the program, participants will have gained not only technical and policy insight, but also stronger connections with peer networks, institutions, and regional bodies. Applications are currently open and will close on April 6, 2025 (11:59 UTC).

For more info:

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About West African Youth Internet Governance Forum (WAYIGF) 2025

The West African Youth Internet Governance Forum (WAYIGF) 2025 will take place on May 21, 2025, in a hybrid format from Abuja, Nigeria, bringing together 200 young participants from across the region. This youth-led forum is an official pre-event of WAIGF 2025 and serves as a dynamic space for young people to engage in Internet governance and digital policy discussions. With a theme focused on AI governance, the Global Digital Compact (GDC), and WSIS+20, the event aligns with broader global conversations while amplifying regional youth voices in shaping the future of the internet.

The main objective of WAYIGF 2025 is to equip youth with the knowledge, tools, and networks to participate meaningfully in policy development and digital transformation across West Africa. The forum will include keynote sessions, hands-on workshops, lightning talks, and side chats led by regional and global partners such as ICANN, Internet Society, and META. Pre-event activities - such as a regional tech policy hackathon and social media campaigns—will create early momentum, gather ideas, and build excitement. The forum also aims to create opportunities for dialogue between youth, policymakers, and private sector actors.

Expected outcomes of the forum include a stronger presence of youth in Internet governance spaces, actionable policy recommendations on AI, digital inclusion, and cybersecurity, and the formation of new partnerships between youth networks and decision-makers. The forum will also produce a post-event impact report, capturing participant insights, policy proposals, and next steps for youth-led advocacy and innovation in the region.

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About Parliamentary Track 2025

The Parliamentary Track of the West African Internet Governance Forum (WAIGF) 2025 will be held during the main forum in Abuja, Nigeria, with the participation of around 30 Parliamentarians from across West Africa. Introduced in 2024, this track reflects the increasing importance of legislative engagement in shaping digital transformation and Internet policy across the region. Under the session theme, “Fostering Digital Governance and Internet Policies in West Africa”, this year’s focus will center on AI governance, WSIS+20, and the Global Digital Compact (GDC)—three priority areas for aligning national digital laws with global best practices.

The objective of the Parliamentary Track is to strengthen the role of lawmakers in digital governance by creating a space for peer exchange, expert insights, and strategic collaboration with other stakeholders. Through keynote presentations and panel discussions, participants will explore the legal, ethical, and socio-economic implications of emerging technologies and policy frameworks. The sessions will help deepen understanding of complex issues like AI regulation, digital inclusion, cybersecurity, and the regional relevance of international digital commitments. Parliamentarians will also have the opportunity to engage directly with civil society, the private sector, and regional institutions.

Expected outcomes of the 2025 Parliamentary Track include increased awareness of global and regional digital policy developments among lawmakers, a set of policy recommendations focused on AI governance, WSIS+20, and the GDC, and the strengthening of inter-parliamentary and multistakeholder partnerships across West Africa. Outputs will include a session report, a concise policy brief, and the groundwork for a regional action plan and follow-up strategy. This initiative positions Parliamentarians as key actors in ensuring inclusive, rights-based, and forward-looking digital policy across the ECOWAS region.

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