

Community

Recommendations

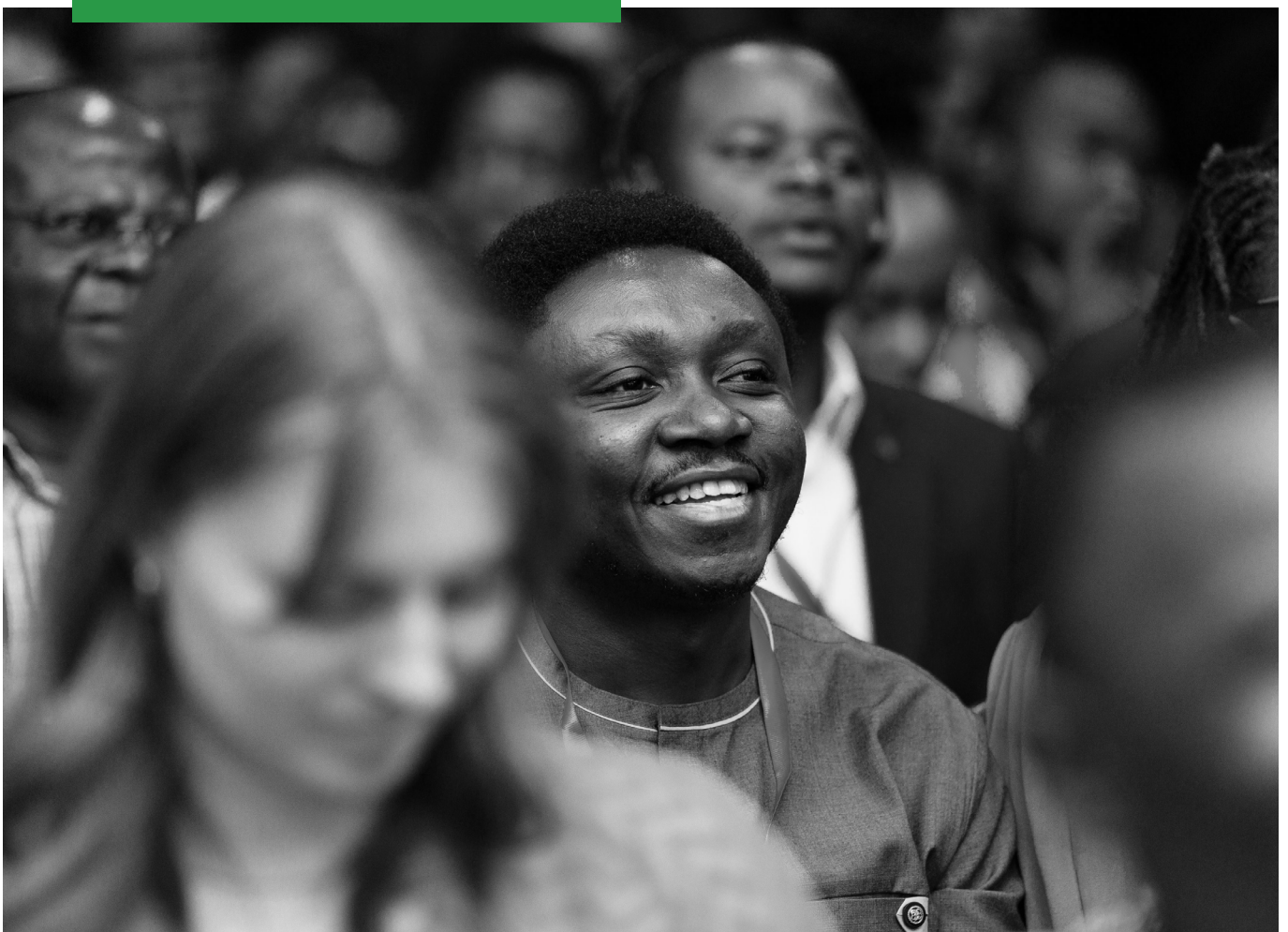


Background



The Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF) is an important platform where conversations on digital policy in Africa are shaped, policy directions debated, and partnerships forged for action. It hosts diverse skills and capacities for enhancing digital rights and inclusion on the African continent and beyond. It is a Paradigm Initiative (PIN) flagship platform for communities of practice around privacy, affordable Internet, increasing women's access to digital tools, health surveillance during COVID-19 times, Internet shutdowns and similar themes. DRIF has set its tone as the arena for challenging topical global issues around Internet rights, especially in Africa and consolidating views from civil society, technology companies, government, academia, and other stakeholders. The 11th edition held in Accra Ghana from 23 - 25 April 2024 streamlined engagements focusing on the theme: Fostering Rights and Inclusion in the Digital Age. DRIF24 was attended by 540 stakeholders who made critical recommendations to create the envisaged environment for rights and inclusion in the digital age.

Community Recommendations



The DRIF Community made the following recommendations to different stakeholders towards fostering rights and inclusion in the digital age:

01.

Recommendations to Governments

1. Attend and participate in global conversations on AI governance frameworks to ensure that the voices and concerns of African communities are represented.
2. Promote collaborative in-country multi-stakeholder engagements in internet governance.
3. Invest in digital skills development to empower citizens
4. Promote the development of open and accessible technical infrastructure to promote innovation and access.
5. Enact policy and regulatory frameworks that support an open and inclusive internet in underserved regions.
6. Develop robust legal frameworks that safeguard the online safety of journalists and human rights defenders enshrining privacy protections in legislation.
7. Support initiatives aimed at improving connectivity and capacity building
8. Provide assistive technologies and tools for persons with disabilities to improve their use of technology.
9. Develop disability-friendly websites to ensure access to information for persons with disabilities.
10. Enact laws that support access to technology by persons with disabilities
11. Promote digital literacy in high schools and rural communities, ensuring everyone has access to information and resources for a sustainable digital future.
12. Collaborate with stakeholders in the digital rights ecosystem to strengthen effective reporting mechanisms and address digital rights violations.
13. Foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing among the judiciary across the region to promote a consistent and rights-based approach to digital governance
14. Develop and enforce robust legal frameworks for data protection and cybercrime.
15. Ensure transparency and accountability in government-led digital initiatives.
16. Foster collaboration with civil society organisations to address concerns regarding privacy and discrimination.

17. Promote interoperability and standards among national identification data systems.
18. Collaborate with AU member states to facilitate cross-border data flow and regional integration.
19. Allocate adequate resources to address cybercrime and implementation of regional frameworks.
20. Strengthen laws and enforcement mechanisms to prosecute cybercriminals effectively.
21. Establish clear guidelines for the use of digital forensic tools in journalistic investigations.
22. Strengthen internet infrastructure and ensure affordable access to improve digital connectivity.
23. Address the digital divide for unserved and underserved communities.

02.

Recommendations to the Private Sectors

1. Adopt sustainable practices to reduce carbon emissions and minimise environmental impact.
2. Adopt ethical data collection and usage practices, adhering to local and regional legal frameworks.
3. Enhance transparency on data-sharing agreements and partnerships with governments.
4. Invest in cybersecurity measures to safeguard sensitive data from unauthorised access or misuse.
5. Engage in meaningful cooperation with governments and civil society to address digital governance challenges.
6. Demonstrate commitment to human rights principles in business operations and partnerships.

7. Proactively request for judicial orders when faced with orders for internet shutdown from governments and be transparent with regards to responses.
8. Translate community standards in all languages to ensure inclusion.
9. Invest in biometric technology and infrastructure to enhance identity verification capabilities embedding human rights considerations.
10. Partner with the government through Public Private Partnerships to improve digital infrastructure and promote inclusion of marginalised groups.
11. Develop rights-respecting digital policies and standards.
12. Adopt meaningful content moderation to ensure an enabling digital rights environment.



03. Recommendations to the Media

1. Amplify the voices of marginalised communities.
2. Advocate for press freedom and access to information to facilitate informed public discourse.
3. Raise awareness on digital rights violations.
4. Provide platforms for public debate on digital rights issues.

04.

Recommendations to CSOs

1. Create safe and secure online platforms where human rights defenders can engage in dialogue, share resources, and mobilise support for their work.
2. Build the capacity of communities at risk of online violence or attacks and those at risk of digital exclusion.
3. Collaborate with government and private sector stakeholders to promote responsible data governance practices.
4. Provide legal support to safeguard journalists' safety and press freedom.
5. Litigate to protect independent journalism and digital rights in different contexts where there are digital rights violations.
6. Advocate for the development of regulatory frameworks compliant with regional and international standards.
7. Collaborate with the ACHPR to protect and promote digital rights and inclusion in Africa.



05.

Recommendations to the academia

1. Research the impact of internet governance policies on marginalised communities.
2. Integrate digital rights and inclusion topics into educational curricula.
3. Research less discussed topics such as the intersection between digital technologies and environmental sustainability.
4. Develop relevant curriculum, provide educational resources and training programs on data protection and cybersecurity for policymakers and the public.
5. Collaborate with stakeholders to develop evidence-based policies and interventions.

06.

Recommendations to the DRIF Convenor

1. Invite participation of more government actors, in particular Ministers of ICTs, Regulatory Authorities and African Union representatives to engage with the DRIF community.
2. Consider hosting future DRIF's in Lusophone and Francophone countries.





Paradigm Initiative (PIN) is a non-profit pan-African organisation that connects under-served young Africans with digital opportunities and ensures the protection of their rights. In addition to being a convenor of the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF), we have directly impacted more than 150,000 youth with improved livelihoods through our digital inclusion and digital rights programs and also built online platforms that educate and serve as safe spaces for reporting digital rights violations. These mediums, in the form of reports, short films, and educational online platforms, include Ayeta, Londa, and Ripoti.



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