

# Communique adopted at the conclusion of the Legislators' Retreat on Strengthening Nigeria's Digital Future through Rights-Based Legislation in Lagos, Nigeria, on 21–22 November 2025.



## Introduction

A two-day Legislators' Retreat on *Strengthening Nigeria's Digital Future through Rights-Based Legislation* was held in Lagos for the Chairmen, selected members, and staff of various committees of the National Assembly, particularly the Senate Committee on ICT and Cybersecurity, and the Committee on Digital and Information Technology of the House of Representatives. Others are Rules and Business, Human Rights, and Media and Public Affairs committees. The retreat was also attended by representatives of civil society organisations, digital rights experts, and academics.

The Retreat was organised by Paradigm Initiative (PIN), Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF) France in Nigeria, and the Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD), and it took place on November 21 and 22, 2025, at Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos.

The Retreat examined, among other topics, Nigeria's Digital Rights Landscape: Challenges and Opportunities; Global Trends in Digital Rights Legislation with a particular focus on lessons from the European Union experience; the Regulation of Artificial Intelligence: EU's Approach and Lessons for Nigeria; and the Role of the Legislature in Protecting Digital Freedoms.

It reviewed in detail the draft Digital Rights and Freedoms Bill, during which reflections were shared on the current draft of the Bill, with proposals on how to strengthen the Bill.

The meeting thereafter adopted this communique with the following resolutions and recommendations.

## Key Observations

Participants made the following observations:

- (a) Nigeria, as with many countries around the world, is experiencing a growing role of digital technologies in governance, economic development, and social inclusion, which underscores the need to safeguard fundamental rights online and in the digital environment, including privacy, freedom of expression, access to information, freedom of assembly and association; as well as equitable access to the Internet and digital technologies;
- (b) The multiplicity of existing laws and pending Bills touching on the use, development and deployment of digital tools and resources highlights the importance of harmonising Nigeria's legislative frameworks for consistency as well as for compliance with regional and international standards while reflecting our national realities;
- (c) The Digital Rights and Freedoms Bill (DRFB) requires careful alignment with existing laws, including the Nigeria Data Protection Act, to ensure coherent protection of rights and effective enforcement.
- (d) Concerns remain around the gaps in data protection frameworks and practices, online harms, connectivity challenges, protection of minors, disability inclusion, and the need for stronger institutional coordination;
- (e) Emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, present both opportunities and risks, requiring context-sensitive standards that address potential misuse and safeguard public interest.
- (f) Nigeria's vision of achieving a \$1 trillion economy by 2030 will be largely helped by digital opportunities, and given that trust is at the centre of the digital economy, there is an urgent need to commit to promoting a rights-respecting, inclusive, and accountable digital environment for all Nigerians.
- (g) Digital inclusion goes beyond access; nationwide digital literacy, institutional accountability, and multi-stakeholder collaboration are essential to ensure meaningful participation for all citizens.

## Commitments, Resolutions and Recommendations

In light of the above, participants agreed to:

### Legislative Action

- (a) Work with Paradigm Initiative, Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF) France in Nigeria, Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD), and other civil society organisations to advance stakeholder conversations on the Digital Rights and Freedoms Bill to ensure early buy-in and successful implementation when it becomes a law.
- (b) Consolidate all digital rights, technology, and AI-related bills currently at different stages of the legislative process in both chambers of the National Assembly to facilitate a coordinated and holistic review, leading to harmonisation, where possible and desirable.
- (c) Further to the above, the Senate Committee on ICT and Cybersecurity as well as the Committee on Digital and Information Technology of the House of Representatives will collaboratively prepare and submit formal reports to the leadership of both chambers.
- (d) Consistent with the above approach, the Digital Rights and Freedoms Bill (DRFB), 2024 should be carefully reviewed to ensure alignment with existing laws, including the Cybercrimes Act and the Nigerian Data Protection Act, to ensure coherent protection of rights and effective enforcement.
- (e) Adopt legislation that seek to create conditions that can ensure that all

individuals and communities, especially the most disadvantaged, such as women and girls, persons with disabilities, rural and low-income communities, elderly persons, internally displaced persons, among others, have affordable, reliable and equitable access to, use of, and benefit from digital technologies to enhance meaningful participation for everyone in today's digital world.

- (f) Ensure an alignment of Nigeria's legislative efforts and frameworks with regional and international norms and standards consistent with Nigeria's national values and priorities, while safeguarding foundational rights.
- (g) Facilitate multi-stakeholder participation in the legislative process and other activities of the National Assembly, in order to harvest perspectives and ideas from a diverse pool of technical, legal, economic, and social expertise, including government ministries, departments and agencies; civil society organisations, the private sector, academia, technical experts, professional associations, and affected communities, where applicable. This will result in better-crafted, well-informed, practical, and future-proof laws.
- (h) Leverage the Internet and other digital technologies to enhance access to legislative processes, records and documents, including schedules,

hansards, Bills, resolutions, reports, among others.

### Civil Society Engagement

- (a) Intensify public awareness, enlightenment and sensitisation efforts on digital rights and responsibilities, as well as available remedies and the mechanisms for their realisation.
- (b) Contribute to strengthening the legitimacy and transparency of the National Assembly and its various processes through evidence-based engagement, aimed at fostering public trust in the Legislature and improved citizen engagement.

### Collaboration and Transparency

- (a) Establish periodic engagements between legislators and civil society to sustain dialogue, foster trust, and support long-term collaboration beyond the 10<sup>th</sup> National Assembly and the current Administrations.
- (b) Develop and adopt systems and processes to facilitate civil society access to the National Assembly to observe sessions as part of the process of enhancing transparency.

## Way Forward

We reaffirm our collective commitment to building a lasting partnership that advances a rights-respecting digital future for all Nigerians. We call on the government, civil society, private sector, regional institutions, and international partners to support ongoing efforts in legislative development, digital literacy, and multi-stakeholder engagement.

*Adopted by all participants at the Legislative Retreat on Strengthening Nigeria's Digital Future in Lagos, Nigeria, this 22nd day of November 2025.*

### Signatories:

- Members of the Senate Committee on ICT and Cybersecurity
- Members of the House of Representatives, National Assembly
- Paradigm Initiative (PIN)
- Avocats Sans Frontières France (ASF France)
- Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD)
- Media Rights Agenda
- Civil Society Organisations, digital rights experts, and academics present at the retreat