The Center for African Affairs and Conflict Research (CAACOR) Digital Identity and National Security in Africa fellowship 2020

Call for Applications

The coming information technology revolution in Africa will be a key enabler to expanding economies, financial inclusion, revolutionizing service provision to citizens, and promoting continental free trade. A data-based economy, allowed by such potentials as interoperability, data portability, and trust frameworks presents opportunities to mainstream marginalized populations in the digital economy, as well as expanding the economic pie in the region. At the same time, lax government regulation of digital platforms and technologies provide governments with data and technical tools for surveillance of their citizens, threatening human rights.

While governments and regional bodies ramp up efforts to take advantage of opportunities presented by a digital economy, the future of holistic inclusion remains yet unexplored. There are several efforts to foreground inclusion through digital identities, while outlining privacy risks. Furthermore, non-government organizations have variously engaged governments as countervailing forces in policy debates on data governance, digital identity systems, and continental frameworks and principles on personal data. It remains crucial that all stakeholders consider inclusion as a present imperative, as well as an emerging future concern. Three important questions remain ripe for exploration: How can digital identity policymakers in Africa balance legitimate national security interests with consideration for risks to individual privacy and human rights? How will digitization of African economies hasten inclusion for marginalized groups, including displaced individuals and refugees? Which multi-stakeholder engagements and interdisciplinary approaches can be deployed to create Africa-specific evidence bases on digitization and conflict research in Africa?

CAACOR in Partnership with CIPIT at Strathmore University, WISER at The University of Witwatersrand and CLET at Makerere University invite applications for the inaugural **Digital Identity and National Security Fellowship.** The purpose of the fellowship is to build intellectual

capital and contribute to the understanding of the relationship between Digital Identity, national security and surveillance on the continent. Fellows are expected to investigate one or more of the following thematic areas;

❖ How can digital identity policymakers in Africa balance legitimate national security interests with consideration for risks to individual privacy and human rights?

❖ What is the impact of digitization of African economies on inclusion of marginalized groups, including displaced individuals and refugees?

❖ Which multi-stakeholder engagements and interdisciplinary approaches can be deployed to create Africa-specific evidence bases on digitization and conflict research in Africa?

Eligibility

To be eligible, applicants must be registered graduate students at Strathmore University, Makerere University or the University of Witwatersrand, with priority given to graduate students with existing research on technology use in Africa.

Interested applicants from African universities outside the participating institutions are welcome to apply if referred by faculty or staff from participating research institutions. If you would like to be referred by faculty or staff from participating research institutions, please send an email to info@caacor.org copying wakesho.kililo@caacor.org. Candidates form Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Sahel Region are encouraged to apply.

Fellowship benefits and expectations:

Fellows will;

❖ Receive a modest stipend to support research costs for the duration of the fellowship as well as costs for attending a virtual workshop at the end of the research period

❖ Attend a virtual orientation to prepare for research on the **15th of July 2020**

❖ Submit an informal mid-term report by the **30th of September 2020**

- ❖ Present at a virtual conference held at the conclusion of the research **24th of November 2020**
- ❖ Submit a final project paper on the **30th November 2020**
- ❖ Complete all assignments and participate in all fellowship events

Application Process

CAACOR, CIPIT, CLET and WISER invite applicants to complete this online application form. Answers should be as clear and detailed as possible. Applications should be submitted with a resume indicating all experience relevant to the fellowship and a statement of purpose attached.

Applicants should submit a 250-500 word abstract of the intended area of research and two letters of recommendation to info@caacor.org copying wakesho.kililo@caacor.org. (The letters of recommendation should be from persons in a position to affirm the value of the fellowship in the context of the Applicants academic work and interests; and at least one of the referees should be a faculty member of the Applicants University, preferably an advisor if the Applicant has one)

Application deadline

Applications close on **June 30th, 2020 at 11.59 pm EAT**. Incomplete applications and applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

Selection process

All applications will be carefully considered by a selection committee and successful applicants contacted by the **6th of July 2020.**

Enquiries

For further information, please contact the fellowship coordinator at wakesho.kililo@caacor.org. copying info@caacor.org.