African operators commit to interconnect between countries
AfPIF-5 successfully concluded in Dakar, Senegal

[Dakar, Senegal– 26-28 August 2014] African Internet Service Providers, infrastructure providers and Internet Exchange operators committed to interconnect and share more content within the region at the 5th Africa Peering and Interconnection Forum organized by the Internet Society.

More than 175 participants drawn from all over Africa and the rest of the world, gathered for the annual Africa Peering and Interconnection Forum (AfPIF), which seeks to improve Internet interconnection and traffic exchange in Africa and contribute to increase quality of access of Internet as well as reduce the costs of Internet. Currently, most African providers have to route their Internet traffic through Europe or North America, even when the traffic is for networks within the continent or within the same country. As an example, for one to access a Senegalese website from the Gambia, the connection will have to go through Europe, which negatively impacts the speed and reliability of the connection.

In the past eight years, Africa has seen a considerable increase in submarine fiber optic cables as well terrestrial backbones connecting cities and towns across most African countries. Nevertheless, this considerable investment has not produced an equally considerable reduction in the cost of access to the end user nor an increase in local content and applications. One of the reasons is because the traffic continues to be routed through Europe and North America just as it did when Africa was connected to the rest of the world using satellite links.

"With so many of the continent's networks not directly interconnected, initiatives to develop capacity for implementing Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) are critical. The support of country code Top Level Domains (ccTLDs) is also a major priority. The deployment of security solutions and IPv6 are critically important, as is the development of mobile and wireless Internet technology," said Sofie Maddens, Senior Director of Global Services at the Internet Society.

Dawit Bekele, Director of the African Regional Bureau at the Internet Society, added, "It is time for the digital integration of Africa. In this increasingly digital world, direct Internet connection between Africans, whether within the same country or across different countries, is critically important for socio-economic development."

There are many barriers to African Internet interconnection. Many obsolete laws and regulations are still not favorable for interconnection. Even though Africa has undeniably considerable content to offer for its citizens and the rest of the world, most of the content is

not yet digitized or on-line. Even when it is on-line, it is often hosted outside the continent requiring users to use expensive international bandwidth to access it. AfPIF addressed the challenges of local content generation and hosting, and explored ways to change the current status quo of the African traffic in line with the vision of the Internet Society, which is to have 80% local traffic in Africa by 2020.

The conference was supported by reputed companies such as Google, AMS-IX, Netnod, Seacom, DE-CIX, AFRINIC, Liquid Telecom, LINX, dot Africa, Akamai, France-IX, ARTP and Orange and benefited from speakers from around the world.

About the Internet Society

The Internet Society is the trusted independent source for Internet information and thought leadership from around the world. It is also the organizational home for the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). With its principled vision and substantial technological foundation, the Internet Society promotes open dialogue on Internet policy, technology, and future development among users, companies, governments, and other organizations. Working with its members and Chapters around the world, the Internet Society enables the continued evolution and growth of the Internet for everyone.

For more information, visit www.internetsociety.org

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