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*National and Regional Internet
Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs)*



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A special edition of GISWatch, "Internet governance from the edges: NRIs in their own words", is being published as a companion edition to the 2017 GISWatch annual report. It looks at the history, challenges and achievements of NRIs, as recounted by their organisers. It is available at <https://www.giswatch.org>

MALAWI AND MOZAMBIQUE

A TALE OF TWO NEIGHBOURS: NATIONAL IGFS IN MOZAMBIQUE AND MALAWI



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Introduction

The Malawi Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and the Mozambique Smart Dialogue on Internet Governance were both launched in July 2014 as part of a programme to promote internet governance in Southern Africa. This report compares and contrasts the way in which the two forums came about, the evolution of internet governance processes in the two countries, and the possible impact that the two forums have had.

Policy, economic and political background

Although Malawi and Mozambique share a border, the two countries have significant differences as summarised in Table 1.

Malawi obtained independence in 1964 and was a one-party state for 30 years, whereas Mozambique obtained independence in 1975 after a 10-year war. From 1977 to 1992 there was civil war in Mozambique, mostly due to tensions between the one-party government and the opposition. Similar to Malawi, Mozambique had its first democratic elections in 1994.

Other similarities between the two countries can be seen in their emphasis on agriculture, which contributes 20% of Mozambique's gross domestic product (GDP) and close to 30% of Malawi's GDP. With regard to information and communications technologies (ICTs), the indicators in Table 2 show that both countries are lagging in internet penetration.

The policy and legal environment as it relates to ICTs in both countries still needs strengthening. Malawi's "National ICT Policy: An ICT-led Malawi"¹ was finalised in 2013,² focusing on IT,

TABLE 1.

Background information on Malawi and Mozambique

Attribute	Malawi	Mozambique
Colonial history	British (independence in 1964)	Portuguese (independence in 1975)
Population*	18 million	29 million
Geographical location	Land-locked	Coastal
Land area**	118 sq. km	802 sq. km

* <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp>. ** www.nationsencyclopedia.com

TABLE 2.

ICT indicators for Malawi and Mozambique

Statistic	Malawi	Mozambique
Internet penetration*	9%	9%
Mobile broadband penetration*	16%	9%
Fixed-line broadband*	0.0%	0.1%
International Telecommunication Union (ITU) ICT Development Index (2016)*	168/175	163/175
World Economic Forum (WEF) Networked Readiness Index (2016)**	132/139	123/139

* <https://www.itu.int/net4/ITU-D/idi/2016> ** www3.weforum.org/docs/GITR2016/WEF_GITR_Malawi_2016.pdf and www3.weforum.org/docs/GITR2016/WEF_GITR_Mozambique_2016.pdf

1 www.ict.gov.mw/index.php/resource-docs/policies/file/24-national-ict-policy

2 The process started in 1999 as part of the UN Economic Commission for Africa's Africa Information Society Initiative (AIS). See: <https://www.uneca.org/publications/african-information-society-initiative-aisi-decade%E2%80%9995-perspective>

telecommunications, broadcasting and postal services and prioritising the integration of ICT in all sectors and the provision of ICT services to rural areas. The Policy has 10 broad themes and 38 policy statements; eight of the statements relate to universal access to ICT and ICT services, underscoring the importance placed on (rural) access. The policy, among other things, called for the establishment of a national ICT steering group “to provide oversight and leadership on Sector ICT Strategy formulation and implementation” – this has evolved into the National ICT Working Group (NICTWG). The policy also called for transformation of the Department of e-Government into the Malawi Information Technology Agency, but this has yet to materialise. Subsequent policy and legislative initiatives include:

- National ICT Master Plan 2014-2031, which outlines the implementation strategy of the national ICT policy.³
- Digital Broadcasting Policy (2013-2018), developed to provide a framework for the transition of broadcasting from analogue to digital terrestrial television broadcasting.⁴
- Electronic Transactions Act (Oct 2016), which among other things makes provision for electronic transactions and for the establishment and functions of the Malawi Computer Emergency Response Team (MCERT).⁵
- (Revised) Communications Act (2016) replacing the 1998 Act, focusing on convergence, technology neutrality and aiming to stimulate local investment and participation in the communications sector.⁶
- Draft national cybersecurity strategy, which was validated in March 2017.

Mozambique’s ICT Policy (*Política de Informática*)⁷ was drafted in 2000⁸ and aimed to “provide a reference framework for the harmonious and sustainable development of the Information Society in Mozambique.” It was followed in 2002 by the

ICT Policy Implementation Strategy (*Estratégia de Implementação da Política de Informática*).⁹ Some of the subsequent policy and legislative initiatives include:

- E-Government Strategy 2006¹⁰
- Consultations to review the 2004 Telecommunications Act in 2013
- Electronic Transactions Act of 2017¹¹
- Draft cybersecurity strategy in 2017.¹²

Building and sustaining an internet governance agenda

Following the launch of the Southern Africa IGF (SAIGF) and in line with the Oliver Tambo Declaration¹³ by African ministers responsible for ICTs, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) ICT ministers called for all member states in the region to establish IGFs. At the time, Tanzania was the only member state with an IGF, by virtue of its membership in the East African Community. The NEPAD Agency,¹⁴ as part of its internet governance programme, undertook to help establish national IGFs in SADC member states. Malawi and Mozambique were selected on the basis of stakeholder willingness, and were the first IGFs to be held in Southern Africa.

In Malawi, the main stakeholder was the National ICT Working Group (NICTWG), which is a multistakeholder group initiated by the Ministry of ICT’s Department of E-Government¹⁵ to advise the government on issues pertaining to ICT development. As such it was easy to get buy-in from key stakeholders and Malawi further reinforced its commitment by agreeing to host the 2014 SAIGF.

In Mozambique, the Science, Innovation and Information and Communication Research Institute (SIITRI)¹⁶ was identified as the entry point for launching the national IGF, based on its linkage with government stakeholders¹⁷ and

3 www.ict.gov.mw/index.php/resource-docs/policies/file/1-national-ict-master-plan

4 www.ict.gov.mw/index.php/resource-docs/policies/file/22-malawi-digital-broadcasting-policy

5 www.ict.gov.mw/index.php/resource-docs/policies/file/5-electronic-transactions-act

6 www.ict.gov.mw/index.php/resource-docs/policies/file/4-communications-act

7 www.portaldogoverno.gov.mz/por/content/download/1431/12112/version/1/file/Estrat%C3%A9gia+Pol%C3%ADtica+de+Inform%C3%A1tica.pdf

8 Similar to the case of Malawi, this policy was developed through the Africa Information Society Initiative (AISII).

9 www.portaldogoverno.gov.mz/por/content/download/1432/12117/version/1/file/Estrat%C3%A9gia+de+Implementa%C3%A7%C3%A3o+Pol%C3%ADtica+de+Inform%C3%A1tica.pdf

10 www.portaldogoverno.gov.mz/por/content/download/1430/12107/version/1/file/Estrategia+do+Governo+Eletr%C3%B3nico-Mocambique.pdf

11 www.portaldogoverno.gov.mz/por/content/download/7051/51882/version/1/file/LEI_DE_TRANSACCIONES_ELECTRONICAS.pdf

12 www.ciberseguranca.org.mz

13 https://www.researchictafrica.net/multistake//African_Union_2009_-_Oliver_Tambo_Declaration.pdf

14 www.nepad.org

15 www.ict.gov.mw/index.php/departments/e-government

16 www.siitri.ac.mz

17 The founder of SIITRI, Prof. Venancio Massingue (who passed away in February 2017), was a former Minister of Science and Technology in Mozambique.

its involvement with the Alliance for Affordable Internet,¹⁸ which at the time was in the process of organising its first multistakeholder forum in Mozambique. Consultations were held by the NEPAD Agency with government entities in both countries to ensure a common understanding of and support for both launch events.

While Malawi chose to retain the name Internet Governance Forum for its event, Mozambique opted for Smart Dialogue on Internet Governance (SDIG), similar to the European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG). Anecdotal evidence suggests that at the time, there was some discomfort with the understanding of a “forum” as being an institutional structure that would require formalised approvals for its establishment, whereas a dialogue was easily understood.

In Malawi, a charter was drafted and adopted at the launch event on 14 July 2014. It is a one-page document that outlines the aims and objectives of the forum, how it will be organised and managed, and what activities it will engage in to accomplish its objectives. The charter was drafted through a consultative process and managed to articulate essential elements simply and in language that suited the different stakeholder groups; it could serve as a useful reference for other IGFs in the region or continent.

The agenda for the inaugural IGF was largely based on the global IGF agenda with some additional agenda items suited to the local environment. The agenda also focused on the operational aspects of the forum (the charter, communication, secretariat, sustainability). The launch was graced by the Permanent Secretary for E-Government (Government of Malawi) and was well attended.

The Mozambique launch agenda was very contextualised to the local environment and the event was attended by a cross-section of stakeholders, mostly from academia and the private sector. Examples of “local” issues discussed at the SDIG include participative management of the internet and its critical resources; local content creation, dissemination and use; and models to provide internet to rural communities.

In April 2015, both Malawi and Mozambique sent representatives to a workshop aimed at developing capacity in the organising of national IGFs; the workshop also discussed and endorsed the

terms of reference of the SAIGF Multistakeholder Coordinating Team. Both countries did not hold national IGFs in 2015 and 2016, due to resource constraints. However, there were a number of developments related to the ICT and internet space. In Malawi, the Electronic Transactions Act and the revised Communications Act were passed in 2016.

Aside from resource constraints, anecdotal evidence indicates that Mozambique's SDIG suffered from a lack of properly instituted multistakeholder processes for its operationalisation. The Dialogue was also overtaken by other processes such as the Maputo Internet Forum and the Alliance for Affordable Internet's Multistakeholder Coalition. The first Maputo Internet Forum was held in October 2015,¹⁹ the second in September 2016,²⁰ and the third in October 2017.²¹ This Forum is modelled after the Stockholm Internet Forum, and the Mozambique events focused on issues of internet access, security, privacy and freedom, and internet governance. The Maputo Internet Forum appears to have engaged a more diverse cross-section of actors than the SDIG, including government officials and parliamentarians. The Alliance for Affordable Internet has also continued with its multistakeholder coalition focusing on three issues: infrastructure sharing and open access, taxation, and ICT data. In 2017, Mozambique drafted a cybersecurity strategy, and in its submission to the ITU Council Working Group on International Internet-related Public Policy Issues (ITU CWG-Internet) in January 2017, it made mention that it had plans to launch a national IGF (further reinforcing the observation that the July 2014 Dialogue had not attained legitimacy).²²

Malawi held its second national IGF in September 2017 with the full support of the Ministry of ICT, the NICTWG and the ICT Association of Malawi (ICTAM).²³

Regional reflection

The Malawi IGF is well connected to the SAIGF and this is in part because Malawi hosted the 2014 SAIGF. There are also linkages with the African IGF (AfIGF): in 2016, the minister responsible for ICTs and his

¹⁸ The Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) (www.a4ai.org) is a global multistakeholder coalition working to enable affordable access to the Internet. A4AI works through local coordinators and multistakeholder coalitions (government, private sector, academia, civil society) to identify areas for policy and/or regulatory intervention that can foster more affordable access.

¹⁹ www.swedenabroad.com/en-GB/Embassies/Maputo/Current-affairs/News/Maputo-Internet-Forum-sys1

²⁰ www.swedenabroad.com/Pages/StandardPage.aspx?id=110832&epslanguage=en-GB

²¹ www.swedenabroad.com/en-GB/Embassies/Maputo/Current-affairs/News/Maputo-Internet-Forum--sys

²² According to the national regulator, Instituto Nacional das Comunicações de Moçambique (INCM), consultations were held in 2016 on the establishment of a national IGF for Mozambique. www.incm.gov.mz/forum-de-governacao-na-forja

²³ ICTAM is an umbrella body for ICT professionals in Malawi. <https://www.ictam.org.mw>

deputy attended the AfIGF held in Durban. The minister also attended the global IGF in Mexico in 2016.

Mozambique, as a member of the SADC, is also linked to the SAIGF, although it is not clear to what extent there is actual participation in the SAIGF.

In both countries, participation is more likely to be at government official level; private sector participation is noticeably lacking, and participation from academia or civil society is through project travel support and grants.

There is little evidence that discussions at the global IGF have an impact on national processes in the two countries. There are no mechanisms to follow or contribute to the preparatory processes of the global IGF and there is little to no participation (either in-situ or remotely) by local stakeholders in the global IGF. On the other hand, both countries participate in intergovernmental ICT and telecommunications discourse such as at the ITU and the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation²⁴ (in the case of Malawi); national processes therefore tend to be more aligned to these government-led processes.

Conclusions

In comparing the two countries and how the national IGFs evolved (or not), there are several lessons to take away. The first is the all-important notion of multistakeholder engagement and buy-in. The national IGF in Malawi has survived due to the existence of such a structure, whereas in Mozambique the national IGF failed to get traction. Also, in Mozambique a number of other multistakeholder processes emerged (the Maputo Internet Forum and the Alliance for Affordable Internet), which on the one hand might have made a national IGF seem redundant, and on the other occupied a gap left by the non-existence of the national IGF.

A second lesson to be learned is that of adequate resourcing or resource mobilisation strategies. Both inaugural events for Malawi and Mozambique benefited from project funding, and mobilising resources for subsequent events has been a challenge.

Lastly, strengthening linkages between national and regional processes is important in helping national IGFs act as a bridge between local policy discussions and regional and global discourse.

Action steps

The experiences in Malawi and Mozambique suggest the following:

- National IGFs need to have a local champion (from any stakeholder grouping) and efforts should be made to identify and support these champions. In Malawi, the launch of the national IGF was championed by the NICTWG, while the second forum was made possible by the efforts of a member of the ICTAM who lobbied with both the ICTAM and the NICTWG to organise the Forum. In Mozambique, after the inaugural SDIG, SIITRI was not able to sustain the process and subsequently the regulator has stepped in, which may lend some legitimacy and help to make the process more sustainable.
- Linkages to the regional IGF and contribution to national and regional policy processes can help to make national IGFs more relevant. Malawi's NICTWG has a mandate to shape ICT policy development and its incorporation in the national IGF was intended to provide a mechanism for the discussions at the IGF to find their way into national policy processes. Similarly, in Mozambique, the expectation was that SIITRI would provide the relevant linkages between the SDIG and national policy processes. Both the Malawi and Mozambique processes have not yet demonstrated (significant) linkages with the regional or continental IGFs.
- The agenda for national IGFs needs to balance local needs and global significance. For instance, the inaugural Malawi IGF derived its agenda from the global IGF and may have missed the opportunity to localise the discussions, while the Mozambique SDIG leaned more in favour of localising its agenda. Considering the broader objective of feeding into regional, continental and global discourse, agenda setting at the national level should therefore aim to discuss local issues framed in the context of the regional, continental and global agenda, while at the same time providing an opportunity to introduce new topics of national concern that may not have been considered at the other levels.

24. www.cto.int

National and Regional Internet Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs)

National and Regional Internet Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs) are now widely recognised as a vital element of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) process. In fact, they are seen to be the key to the sustainability and ongoing evolution of collaborative, inclusive and multistakeholder approaches to internet policy development and implementation.

A total of 54 reports on NRIs are gathered in this year's Global Information Society Watch (GISWatch). These include 40 country reports from contexts as diverse as the United States, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea and Colombia.

The country reports are rich in approach and style and highlight several challenges faced by activists organising and participating in national IGFs, including broadening stakeholder participation, capacity building, the unsettled role of governments, and impact.

Seven regional reports analyse the impact of regional IGFs, their evolution and challenges, and the risks they still need to take to shift governance to the next level, while seven thematic reports offer critical perspectives on NRIs as well as mapping initiatives globally.

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