



ACCRA DECLARATION

West Africa Regional Workshop on Youth, Information Communication Technologies and Global Challenges

ACCRA 22 May 2014



We, the youth of West Africa, united on the Universal Human Right Declaration Article 1 & 29: that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, endowed with and reason and conscience to act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood; that everyone has duties to the community in which alone full development is possible reaffirm the vision of International Association for the Advancement of Innovative Approaches to Global Challenges (IAAI-Glocha). We draw inspiration from youth movements around the world, with particular reference to ITU BYND 2015 Global Youth Summit Declaration and Colombo Declaration on 'Mainstreaming Youth in the Post2015 Development Agenda' which highlighted specific needs of global youth in the field of ICT for development.

We as West African Youth believe that we can become key contributors to building an inclusive global Information Society and bridging the Digital Divide in West Africa and ultimately contribute significantly towards addressing the myriad of socio-economic

challenges that have bedeviled our region and which constitute important global challenges.

Like drops of water in the ocean, we can and shall contribute to the development of our respective communities as mandated by the Universal Declaration and we call upon global community and our local public authorities to equip us with the resources to do so. We, the youth of 16 countries of West Africa, representing the 18 million youth movement in the region have gathered to define our vision for the beginning of a new promising journey of West African Youth towards ICT empowered globally connected youth focused development and to address the great leaders of tomorrow. Poverty, illiteracy, high rates of unemployment and limited access to ICTs are some of the challenges that still cause suffering for hundreds of millions of youth in our region.

Our generation faces unprecedented change and rapid transition to knowledge-based economies. As IAAI mobilized the youth in Europe and then appealed to the world to provide resources, we have now mobilized ourselves and now appeal to the leaders of West Africa, ECOWAS and its member states and world leaders to:

- ☞ Recognize youth as powerful agents of change and ensure active participation in the political process.
- ☞ Encourage and invest in the access and innovative use of ICTs that empowers the youth to contribute to sustainable socio-economic development, for example, establish ICT training centres for the youth and support regular youth ICT-related civic engagement activities in West Africa.
- ☞ Include youth in decision-making; planning and implementation of all ICT related policies at all levels.
- ☞ Push for the youth to have a stronger role in culturally relevant, economically sustainable ICT programme development and implementation to empower their communities, particularly from the grassroots.
- ☞ Increase focus on professional ICT training and education for the youth.

Section 1: In a society full of challenges we, the youth of West Africa commit ourselves to:

- 1.1 Do our part in building stronger societies by using the invaluable ICT knowledge, resources, energy, resources and networks of young people to contribute to the socio-economic development of our communities.
- 1.2 Establish and strengthen regional networks to build youth structures for the implementation of ICT training centres

- 1.3 Further utilize social media and emerging technologies to advocate, share ideas, and communicate efficiently
- 1.4 Channeling social energy drive and change for the development of ICT skills to promote socio-economic growth within our communities
- 1.5 Live up to expectation in national and international laws by acting and standing up to promote youth engagement and empowerment through modern information and communication technologies
- 1.6 Foster entrepreneurial and innovative action towards the public good among the youth of West Africa in Post2015 Development Agenda.
- 1.7 Live the Universal Declaration as agents of change in our communities

Section 2: We call on IAAI to:

- 2.1 Rally public-private education service providers build capacity of the youth through ICT training under the auspices of Glocha initiatives
- 2.2 Coordinate, research, monitor and evaluate Glocha initiatives and projects together with all stakeholders
- 2.3 Collaborate with faith-based organizations and traditional authorities to provide ICT training for the youth

Section 3: We call on our respective societies in West Africa to:

- 2.1 Enable youth to take a leadership role in promoting socio-economic growth in our communities using ICT training and education such as Global Challenges (GloCha) Youth and ICT Centre Initiatives
- 2.2 Include youth at the grassroots in decision-making processes
- 2.3 Declare that any form of resource deprivation in the form of accessible ICT training and education is contrary to Article 1 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights as equal access to the Internet is a manifestation of equal dignity and equal rights of all human beings and is a precondition for the development of the full potential of youth to the progress of societies.

Section 4: We call on the governments of West Africa and on the international community to:

- 3.1 Ensure 1% budgetary allocation backed by the necessary legislative instrument as a statutory contribution towards the development of ICT
- 3.2 Pursue practical and effective ICT education and infrastructure development at all levels to guaranty that the youth are not denied their fundamental rights to education and information
- 3.3 Ensure the promotions of public-private partnership to enhance ICT availability, access and affordability at all levels of nation building and establish ICT centres at all levels of West African countries.
- 3.4 Work towards removing the barriers that hamstring the development of ICT knowledge and skills of the youth and to expand access to ICT for young people.
- 3.5 Ensure that education is applied in order to prevent our young people from misuse and abuse of the opportunities offered by Information and Communication Technologies.
- 3.6 Respect international declarations that recognize role of the youth in Post2015 sustainable development.
- 3.7 Seriously address the issue of the widening ICT knowledge gap that exists between young people in West Africa and their counterparts in other regions of the world such Europe and Asia; and also bridge the knowledge gap among young people in urban centres and those in rural economically deprived areas.
- 3.8 Follow through existing commitments on youth empowerment and skill development.

Section 5: We call on all Telecommunication service providers and ICT providers to:

- 5.1. Provide data package, kits and equipment to ensure that public-private funded ICT training centres for the youth in West Africa are fully functional.

We do hereby adopt and certify that this declaration is a true reflection of our deliberations and intentions for incentivizing the desire to empower the West African youth through ICT training and development.