



Somalia Internet Governance Forum (SIGF) 2024

*Empowering Somalia's Digital Future
through Collaborative Internet Governance*



30 November – 1 December 2024
Jazeera Palace Hotel, Mogadishu, Somalia

Organized by: Somali Internet Governance (SIGF) Taskforce

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1) Executive Summary

The Somalia Internet Governance Forum (SIGF) 2024 took place from November 30 to December 1 at Jazeera Palace Hotel in Mogadishu. It gathered stakeholders from Somalia's digital sectors—including government, private companies, civil society, academia, media, and technical experts. Under the theme *"Empowering Somalia's Digital Future through Collaborative Internet Governance,"* the forum served as a national platform to explore ways for Somalia to develop an open, secure, and inclusive internet that promotes growth, safeguards rights, and encourages innovation.

Over two days, participants addressed three key issues: content regulation and free expression, multi-stakeholder governance, and fintech and e-commerce oversight. The discussions were open and focused on finding solutions, emphasizing the importance of policies that balance online safety with free speech, promote inclusivity in digital services, and ensure transparent, collaborative decision-making.

The event featured prominent keynote speeches, engaging panel discussions, and expert-led presentations on topics such as AI governance, reducing the digital divide, responsible data practices, and ethical reporting. Throughout all sessions, one message stood out: achieving sustainable digital progress depends on the contributions of all stakeholders—government, industry, civil society, academia, and individual users. Concrete recommendations emerged, including adopting open consultation processes, integrating digital literacy into education, building local capacity for evidence-based policymaking, fostering ethical media practices, and developing open API standards to connect Somalia's fintech ecosystem in real time.

With over 200 participants, the forum showcased Somalia's commitment to inclusivity and its resolve to shape its digital future. The outcomes of SIGF 2024 will influence national ICT strategies and add to regional and global internet governance discussions, ensuring Somali perspectives help define the future direction of the internet.

2) Introduction

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a United Nations–mandated, open platform that has been enabling governments, businesses, civil society, academia, and the technical community to discuss the Internet’s technical, economic, and human rights issues since 2006. National and regional IGFs contribute local priorities to continental processes and, ultimately, to the annual Global IGF, making sure that domestic voices shape global rules.

The Somalia Internet Governance Forum (SoIGF) 2024—held from November 30 to December 1, 2024, at Jazeera Palace Hotel in Mogadishu—was the second edition of the Somali IGF. It was organized by the Somali Internet Governance Taskforce in partnership with the Somalia Association for Information Communication Technology (SAFICT) and was sponsored by the National Communications Authority (NCA) of Somalia. Under the theme “Empowering Somalia’s Digital Future through Collaborative Internet Governance,” the forum aimed to adapt global IGF principles to Somalia’s rapidly changing digital landscape.

Objectives

The objectives of the SIGF were:

1. Encourage evidence-based discussions on three main themes—content regulation, multistakeholder governance, and fintech/e-commerce oversight.
2. Forge consensus on a balanced regulatory approach that counters harmful online content while safeguarding freedom of expression.
3. Strengthen national capacity and partnerships across all stakeholder groups to advance Somalia’s Transformation Plan 2025-2029.
4. Institutionalise an annual IGF process that channels Somali perspectives to the African and Global IGFs.

Approach

SIGF 2024 was designed around an inclusive, multistakeholder methodology:

- High-level opening addresses to anchor the policy narrative.
- Three thematic panel sessions supported by expert presentations and moderated Q&A, fostering open discussion among ministers, regulators, academics, technical specialists, and rights advocates.
- Documentation and rapporteurship are used to record commitments and integrate them into post-forum policy processes.

This blended format ensured that strategic vision, technical detail, and community experience received equal emphasis—a hallmark of effective Internet governance practice.

Expected Outcomes

Guided by the ambitions outlined in Somalia’s National Transformational Plan 2025-2029 and fully aligned with the country’s ICT Policy and Strategy, SoIGF 2024 was specifically designed to achieve four tangible outcomes that turn national digital development goals into practical, multi-stakeholder commitments.

- Inclusive, meaningful dialogue on Internet governance issues.
- Exchange of best practices related to Somalia’s digital ecosystem.
- Practical suggestions for lawmakers and regulators addressing emerging challenges.
- Improved national capability through collaboration and knowledge-sharing

Participants

The forum gathered **150 delegates** representing all stakeholder groups—civil society, private sector, government, technical community, and academia. The range of voices emphasized SIGF’s dedication to the multistakeholder approach and provided a strong evidence base for the subsequent policy recommendations.

3) Forum Overview



The second Somalia Internet Governance Forum (SIGF) took place over two days, from November 30 to December 1, 2024, at the Jazeera Palace Hotel in Mogadishu. The event was mainly in-person encouraging face-to-face dialogue.

The forum was organized by the SIGF Taskforce in collaboration with the Somalia Association for Information Communication Technology (SAFICT) and SIMAD University. It was sponsored and supported by the National Communications Authority (NCA). At the same time, the Somali Network Information Center (SONIC) served as the technical partner, ensuring that digital infrastructure and registration platforms functioned smoothly under peak load. This combination of policy oversight, academic insight, industry reach, and technical expertise demonstrated the multistakeholder spirit that lies at the core of the global IGF model.

A total of 200 delegates participated, representing a balanced mix of government and regulatory

bodies, private-sector innovators, civil society organizations, technical community actors, and academic institutions. Women made up over 40 percent of all participants. This broad participation ensured that policy discussions were grounded in the real-world experiences, technical limitations, and commercial opportunities across Somalia's digital ecosystem.

The agenda shaped the two-day program around high-level opening speeches, three thematic panel sessions—focused on content regulation, multistakeholder governance, and fintech/e-commerce oversight—and a series of expert presentations on digital polarization, AI-era governance, bridging the digital divide, and mobile-money inclusion. Interactive tools, such as Slido polls and open-floor discussions, gathered real-time feedback, enabling organizers to transform discussions into clear, consensus-based recommendations that support the country's National Transformational Plan and ICT Strategy.

4) Opening Ceremony

The proceedings started with a recitation of the Qur'an and the Somali National Anthem, after which Master of Ceremonies Mohamed Muhyadin guided the audience through the following segments.



The SIGF coordinator, Liban Abdulkadir, opened with the address "Somalia IGF 2024: Shaping a Collaborative Digital Future." Highlighting the event's three main themes—content regulation, multistakeholder governance, and fintech oversight—he emphasized alignment with the National Transformational Plan 2025-2029.



Delivering the keynote address, the Director General of the National Communications Authority of Somalia, Mr. Mustafa Yaasin Sheikh, underscored the regulator's crucial role in shaping Somalia's Internet governance landscape. He described regulation as a catalyst for innovation, remarking that "In the digital era, the regulator must be less a gatekeeper and more a guide—clearing pathways for innovation while protecting the public interest." Emphasizing the Authority's responsibility for issues such as spectrum management, content standards, consumer protection, and cross-border connectivity, he reaffirmed NCA's commitment to inclusive, evidence-based rule-making that both protects users and promotes digital growth.



The Minister of Communications & Technology discussed Somalia's broader digital-transformation agenda. He explained that coherent internet-governance frameworks—covering everything from accessibility to data-protection guidelines—are the main concepts and backbone of the National Digital Transformation Plan and the ICT Policy & Strategy. "Effective internet governance converts policy into practical services and delivers digital opportunities to every Somali." Citing the Government's targets for universal broadband access, expanded e-government services, and higher STEM-enrolment rates.



The highlight of the ceremony came with remarks from H.E. Salah Jama, Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Government of Somalia. His presence signaled clear Cabinet-level support for the multistakeholder process. In opening the forum,

he stated: “Today we move from talk to action, aligning public goals with private innovation to build an open, secure, and inclusive Internet for every Somali”



5) Day 1 Proceedings

High-Level Panel Discussion 1: Balancing Content Regulation and Freedom of Speech on the Internet

The first high-level panel of SIGF 2024 aimed to address one of the most urgent questions in Somalia's evolving digital space: how can harmful or misleading online content be prevented without violating the constitutional right to free expression? The discussion focused on four key policy priorities—public safety, human rights obligations, technological neutrality, and market innovation—and encouraged open, honest exchanges among ministers, academics, and civil society representatives.

The panel featured five distinguished voices:

- H.E. Daud Aweys, Minister of Information, Culture & Tourism
- H.E. Mohamed Adam Moallim, Minister of Communications & Technology
- H.E. Farah Abdulkadir, Minister of Higher Education
- Dr. Ibrahim Mohamed Mursal, President of Mogadishu University
- Mr. Mohamed Adow, Deputy Director for Partnerships, Irise Hub

Minister Daud Aweys began by emphasizing that the government's role is both to protect rights and to defend public interests. He believes that balancing content regulation and freedom of expression relies on transparency, fairness, and proportionality. He acknowledged that in Somalia's current media environment, misinformation can quickly escalate into social tension or even violence.

He stated that upcoming content regulation frameworks should be "transparent, appealable, and time-bound," which means decisions on removals need to be clearly justified, open to challenge, and not indefinite.

When asked about strategies for combating fake news, the Minister highlighted a mix of public awareness campaigns, partnerships with fact-checking organizations, and closer collaboration with social media platforms. He emphasized that regulation alone cannot be effective without involving citizens. "The public needs the tools to distinguish fact from fiction," he said, adding that the Ministry is considering guidelines for responsible reporting to help newsrooms maintain credibility while avoiding censorship.



The session was moderated by Mr. Aweys Hassan Mohamed, a seasoned media and communications specialist, who introduced the discussion by noting that Somalia's growing online community offers both opportunities and risks. He highlighted that while the internet provides unprecedented space for civic participation, creativity, and learning, it can also spread misinformation, hate speech, and harmful narratives if left unchecked. The challenge, he emphasized, is to find solutions that do not silence legitimate voices or hinder



Minister Mohamed Adam discussed the issue from both a technical and policy standpoint. He highlighted that content regulation should be technology-neutral, designed to address harmful behavior across all platforms and media. He said this approach would help prevent regulations from becoming outdated as technology progresses.

The Minister also linked the discussion to Somalia's broader ICT policy goals, emphasizing that a safe digital environment is crucial for innovation, investment, and public trust. He envisioned a future where content safety and freedom of expression work in harmony, not in opposition to each other. Somalia's National ICT Policy, he explained, already includes principles that support both openness and responsibility, and these can help shape balanced content regulations.



Minister Farah Abdulkadir emphasized the influence of online content on education and youth development. He pointed out that misinformation

and harmful narratives not only distort public debate but also mislead students, weaken trust in academic sources, and diminish respect for evidence-based knowledge.

To address these challenges, the Ministry of Higher Education is integrating media literacy into teacher training programs. This will equip educators with the skills to help students critically evaluate online information, recognize bias, and differentiate between reliable and unreliable sources. He argued that digital literacy is not only a technical skill but also a civic one, essential for building resilience against misinformation.



Minister Farah also emphasized that empowering students to responsibly engage online is a long-term investment. If young people learn how to critically evaluate information, they become less vulnerable to misinformation and more capable of contributing to constructive public discourse. "Education is our first line of defense," he said, urging stronger collaboration between the education sector, government agencies, and civil society in shaping the next generation of digital citizens.

Dr. Ibrahim Mohamed contributed an academic viewpoint to the discussion, cautioning against excessive regulation that might unintentionally impede scholarly research or public conversations. He warned that broad laws—despite their good intentions—could suppress academic freedom and open debate.

To ensure content regulation is evidence-based, Dr. Mursal suggested establishing an Online Speech Observatory at Mogadishu University. This would collect data on online content trends, evaluate the effects of harmful narratives, and provide unbiased research to policymakers. He contended that such a resource would assist lawmakers by ensuring rules are accurate and proportionate.



Dr. Ibrahim emphasized the importance of learning from international experiences. He noted that many countries have encountered challenges in balancing safety and freedom, and Somalia can avoid similar mistakes by studying their best practices and cautionary examples. He called for increased dialogue among academia, government, and the private sector to ensure that regulations are grounded in research rather than political influence.

Representing civil society, Mr. Adow highlighted the importance of efforts to promote responsible online behavior. He pointed out that while government policies are important, community-led initiatives tend to gain more trust and have a larger local impact.



Mr. Adow emphasized that civil society must play an active and meaningful role in shaping content regulation policies, rather than merely reacting to them. He argued that policy frameworks are more robust and legitimate when developed through inclusive processes that involve government, academia, the private sector, and community-based organizations from the outset.

He highlighted that promoting free expression is both a constitutional obligation and a vital part of a vibrant, innovative, and democratic society. He noted that civil society is crucial in defending these freedoms and in developing solutions that help limit the spread of harmful content.

Session Takeaways

All panelists agreed that any future legislation should be backed by judicial oversight and a consistent transparency process.

The discussion revealed consensus on several points:

- Content regulation must be transparent, fair, and proportionate.
- Multi-stakeholder involvement is essential at every stage.
- Education and digital literacy are long-term solutions to combating misinformation.
- Academic research can provide the evidence base for precise, effective laws.
- Civil society must have a seat at the table, with clear rights in the process.

By the end of the session, it was clear that Somalia's path forward lies in collaboration between government, academia, civil society, and the private sector to ensure that safety and freedom coexist in the country's digital future.

Expert Presentations

Following the first panel discussion, the forum

proceeded with a series of expert presentations that added depth and practical insights to the day's themes. These talks explored critical dimensions of Somalia's digital journey – from governance in the AI era to bridging the digital divide and addressing polarization in online spaces. Each speaker grounded their remarks in both Somalia's realities and international experience, offering concrete recommendations for action.



Ahmed Osman Ali began with a historical view on internet governance, reminding the audience that while the internet is naturally global and decentralized, governance involves many actors – governments, businesses, civil society, academia, and the technical community. He mentioned that Somalia's challenge is not to reinvent governance principles but to adapt existing norms and frameworks to its unique digital environment.

He explored the dilemmas AI presents to governance: accountability in autonomous decision-making, algorithm bias, data privacy, and the regulation of AI-driven content moderation. Ahmed emphasized that small countries like Somalia face additional challenges, such as limited human and financial resources, which hinder their full participation in global internet governance discussions.

To address these challenges, he advocated for a multi-stakeholder approach that integrates AI governance into broader internet policy. His

recommendations included developing AI ethics guidelines, ensuring transparency in algorithmic processes, and safeguarding user rights through clear, enforceable data privacy laws. In his view, AI should enhance Somalia's digital capacity, not worsen inequalities or diminish freedoms.

Abdifatah Osman highlighted the structural inequalities within Somalia's digital sector. He categorized digital inclusion into three core areas: connectivity, infrastructure, and skills. While there have been advances in expanding 4G coverage, it remains mostly limited to major cities, leaving rural communities reliant on 2G networks. Challenges like the absence of a national data center, a national fiber backbone, and consistent electricity in rural regions further exacerbate these issues.



He also highlighted disparities in digital skills, noting that two-thirds of Somalis lack formal education – a situation that hampers their ability to fully utilize digital tools. He stressed that this is not just a technical issue but a social one, as unequal access to skills widens the overall digital divide. Abdifatah suggested a coordinated effort involving government, private sector, and community groups to expand infrastructure, lower access costs, and incorporate digital literacy into education and vocational programs. He pointed out that digital inclusion is not just about access to technology but about making sure every Somali can use it effectively and securely.

Dr. Fuad Mire Hassan delivered a data-driven exploration of how online polarization shapes Somalia's digital governance challenges. Using sentiment analysis and social media analytics of cases like "Qaadka," Qalbidhagax's extradition, and high-profile court trials, he showed how divisive issues dominate online spaces and influence public opinion. His research revealed how algorithms and engagement-driven platforms can amplify polarizing narratives, affecting political discourse and social cohesion. By analyzing over 20,000 social media entries to quantify public sentiment, Dr. Fuad emphasized the scale of the challenge for policymakers trying to maintain a healthy online information environment.



He explained the technical process behind his findings, from accurate problem definition and targeted data collection via APIs to dataset cleaning, annotation, and machine learning-based sentiment analysis. The analysis not only measured positive, negative, and neutral sentiment but also mapped where the content came from geographically, showing strong activity from Somalia and its diaspora. These insights emphasized that without proper monitoring and evaluation, harmful narratives can spread freely, influencing public perceptions before fact-checking or balanced reporting can step in.

From a governance perspective, Dr. Fuad emphasized that tackling polarization requires more than just reactive content takedowns; it calls

for proactive strategies based on collaboration among government, civil society, academia, and media. He suggested creating national guidelines for responsible online discussion, establishing an independent observatory to monitor digital sentiment, and investing in media literacy to enable users to critically evaluate online content. He argued that these measures are vital for fostering a culture of constructive engagement that enhances Somalia's democratic resilience and aligns with the broader goals of inclusive, rights-based internet governance.

Key Takeaways

The three expert presentations collectively highlighted that Somalia's journey toward a resilient digital future relies on building an inclusive, ethical, and backed by evidence. Regarding AI governance, digital inclusion, and combating online polarization, each speaker emphasized the need for policies that protect rights and foster innovation. This includes setting clear ethical standards for new technologies, ensuring fair access to infrastructure and skills, and adopting proactive approaches to address harmful online narratives.

A key message was that sustainable solutions require collaboration among multiple actors. Effectively tackling AI risks, closing the digital divide, and promoting positive online interactions need ongoing cooperation among government, civil society, academia, the private sector, and technical experts. Each group offers distinct expertise—from policy development and regulation to grassroots efforts and technological advances—highlighting that multi-stakeholder collaboration is crucial, not optional.

6) Day 2 Proceedings

Panel Discussion 2: The Role of Multi-Stakeholder Engagement



This session explored how Somalia can involve multiple stakeholders—including government, private sector, civil society, academia, media, and the technical community—in Internet governance. The discussion emphasized practical frameworks that promote sustainable development, protect rights, and foster inclusive digital growth. Ms. Nasra Abdi, communication specialist, led the conversation, guiding the panel with targeted questions on legal design, private sector engagement, civil society participation, the media's role, and policymaking.

Panelists

- Liban Abdulkadir ICT Regulatory Expert, NCA
- Abdirizak Abdirahman Somali Non-State Actors – SONSA
- Dr. Mohamed Omar Abdullahi Dean, Faculty of Computing, SIMAD
- Ahmed Isse Deputy General Manager, Somtel
- Hussein Sabrie Chief Communications Officer, SomaliREN



Mr. Liban Abdulkadir presented multi-stakeholder engagement as an essential regulatory practice rather than an afterthought. He emphasized that stable rules are established when participation is well-structured through public comment periods, documented impact assessments, and defined timelines for drafting, reviewing, and adopting policies. He explained that legal requirements, such as mandatory consultation

clauses and transparency obligations, guarantee that all significant policies, ranging from content governance to infrastructure sharing, undergo an open process with published reasons and avenues for appeal.



He emphasized the transition from ad-hoc consultations to more dynamic regulatory programs, such as annual work plans, ongoing stakeholder forums, and disclosure dashboards that track how feedback influences draft rules. Mr. Abdulkadir noted that this approach reduces regulatory risk, encourages investment, and protects competition, as market participants can anticipate upcoming rules, offer input, and prepare in advance.

Finally, he suggested aligning national rule-making cycles with the academic calendar and public forums to enhance participation from universities, civil society, and the media. He emphasized that a multistakeholder approach protects fundamental freedoms, especially free expression, by fostering transparency in decision-making and ensuring that content-related measures are proportional, subject to appeals, and time-limited.

Mr. Isse highlighted that operators play a key role in shaping Internet governance outcomes. Besides mere compliance, he identified three ways telecoms can take initiative: (1) establishing data-sharing agreements for anonymized network insights to support evidence-based policies;

(2) conducting collaborative pilots on safe-by-design services, such as parental controls, abuse reporting, and emergency alerts; and (3) making voluntary disclosures about service levels to foster user trust and enhance regulatory discussions.



On inclusion, he emphasized that closing the digital divide is both a commercial and social policy challenge. Operators can enhance last-mile coverage by sharing infrastructure and implementing targeted universal service initiatives, alongside efforts to make devices more affordable and provide community training. He advocated for collaboration between industry and civil society, cofunded awareness campaigns, initiatives for school connectivity, and women-in-tech programs, all managed through MoUs with defined KPIs and reporting requirements.

Mr. Isse also appreciated the value of predictable licensing and spectrum roadmaps, highlighting that investment grows when engagement is consistent and backed by evidence. He believes that multistakeholder processes lower policy uncertainty and enable operators to innovate responsibly.

Mr. Abdirahman highlighted the significance of engaging civil society early in the agenda-setting phase, rather than only seeking their input at the final stages. He proposed a "participation process" for each key policy: beginning with discovery workshops to collect lived experiences;

then publishing issue papers openly in Somali and English; hosting online public hearings; and ending with written responses from authorities to show how community feedback was incorporated.



He highlighted civil society's role as a watchdog in overseeing due process, defending free speech, and ensuring that vulnerable groups, including youth, women, people with disabilities, and rural communities, are heard. He called for small grants to support community evidence projects such as surveys, user-safety studies, and media-literacy pilots to ensure that consultations rely on data rather than just opinions.

To enhance collaboration with the business sector, Mr. Abdirahman proposed joint transparency commitments, such as annual "state of the Internet" reports that cover outages, affordability, content moderation, and complaints handling. These reports would be co-authored by industry and CSOs and presented in public forums to foster trust.

Dr. Abdullahi emphasized that policies should be built on local evidence. Universities can serve as neutral observatories, gathering data on access, affordability, digital harms, and online speech trends, while publishing methods and datasets for public review and analysis. He urged regulators and operators to adopt data-sharing protocols that safeguard privacy and adhere to ethical standards, facilitating thorough analysis without

compromising personal information.



He also stressed the importance of developing human capital. Degrees and short courses in policy tech, data protection, cybersecurity, and platform governance should be co-designed with regulators and industry. Capstone projects could directly address real policy questions, creating a pipeline of Somali talent for both public institutions and private companies.

Mr. Sabrie positioned the media as both participant and enabler of multi-stakeholder governance. Independent outlets can translate complex policies into plain language, host fact-based debates, and hold policymakers accountable by tracking promises against actual delivery. He proposed recurring "policy explainer" segments and town-hall programs co-produced with universities and CSOs, so communities understand rights, responsibilities, and how to participate in consultations.



He advocated for establishing newsroom standards for reporting digital issues, including verification processes, correction policies, and ethics guidelines for managing online harm, in collaboration with regulators, platforms, and civil society. He believed these standards would enhance the quality of discourse, support free expression, and help combat misinformation.

Mr. Sabrie also supported open media access to regulatory proceedings (where appropriate) and the prompt publication of consultation documents, meeting minutes, and decisions. Visibility, he said, is the quickest way to build trust in institutions and maintain inclusive multi-stakeholder processes.

Session Takeaways

- Importance of multi-stakeholder engagement, including consultations, transparency obligations, and appeal mechanisms that protect free expression.
- Civil society to participate in shaping agendas early
- Academia can supply neutral evidence and skills through observatories, shared datasets, and sandboxes.
- Importance of ethical reporting in the media, and preventing fake news from spreading

Panel Discussion 3: Fintech Governance



Somalia's fintech and e-commerce landscape is growing quickly, raising questions about licensing, consumer protection, interoperability, and the responsible use of emerging technologies such as crypto assets. This session examined how policy and market actors can enable innovation while safeguarding stability and users' rights, in line with the forum's multi-stakeholder approach. The discussion was moderated by Ibrahim Noor (Director, SAFICT), who framed debate around three pillars: (1) clear and predictable rules, (2) infrastructure for interoperability and inclusion, and (3) proportionate risk management for

payments and digital assets.

Panelists

- Mahad Mohamud Abdullahi, Director of Licensing & Supervision, Central Bank of Somalia
- Mohamed Ali Adan, Head of Premier Wallet (Premier Bank)
- Deeq Mohamed Afrika, CEO, Bixi Pay
- Abdirahmaan Adan Ali, CEO, Keshflip
- Ilyas Abdikarin Nuur, Head of Legal & Compliance, Hormuud Telecom



Mahad outlined the Central Bank’s role in setting a predictable supervisory perimeter for payments, e-money, and related fintech activities. He highlighted ongoing regulatory work to strengthen licensing categories, clarify prudential and market conduct expectations, and formalize incident reporting and dispute resolution channels. He also noted that the Bank is studying the applicability of crypto assets in the Somali context, with a risk-based lens focused on AML/CFT, financial stability, and consumer protection—so innovation can be explored without compromising safeguards. He welcomed structured industry input as rules mature, emphasizing transparency and phased implementation to give firms time to comply.



Maxamed highlighted the bank’s experience as an early mover in mobile-first services via Premier Wallet. He emphasized three key success factors for bank and fintech collaboration: (1) a clear licensing process for wallet operations and agents; (2) standardized APIs for seamless integration with merchants and government payment systems; and (3) transparent, time-limited approval processes that enable providers to launch and improve their services safely. He also stressed the importance of consumer-protection measures—such as plain-language fees, in-app receipts, and accessible redress channels—to foster trust and encourage adoption, particularly among first-time digital users.



Deeq Mohamed emphasized the importance of inclusion and real-time connectivity within a fragmented ecosystem. He called on the government to seek private-sector technical proposals to improve interoperability actively, avoiding lengthy, repetitive procurements with external vendors. This would enable Somali providers to connect banks, mobile money, wallets, and e-commerce platforms on shared infrastructure. He suggested adopting open interface standards, shared fraud detection signals, and service-level agreements focused on settlement speed and system uptime. According to him, fostering local co-creation will reduce delivery times and help retain value within the local economy.



Abdirahman argued that a clear, navigable framework for crypto-related services (e.g., licensing/registration for virtual-asset service providers, fit-and-proper requirements, and custody/segregation standards) would channel activity into supervised entities while unlocking new use cases—cross-border remittances, savings, and digital commerce—under strong AML/CFT controls. He emphasized consumer education, transparent risk disclosures, and complaint-handling pathways as essential complements to any permissions, so users can benefit from innovation without exposure to predatory practices.



Ilyas highlighted the operator's role as a critical enabler of inclusion through scale, agent networks, and identity/know-your-customer processes. He said Hormuud is ready to expand inclusive services built on secure APIs, privacy-respecting data practices, and interoperability with banks and licensed wallets. Priorities include consistent

SIM-KYC alignment with financial KYC, robust operational resilience (business continuity and incident response), and joint programs to protect consumers from scams and social-engineering. He welcomed predictable, evidence-based regulation to de-risk long-term investment in new services.



Session Takeaways

- Predictable rules & phased rollout: Clarify licensing categories for payments, e-money, agents, and VASPs; phase compliance with published timelines and appealable decisions. Interoperability first: Adopt open API standards and shared settlement/clearing targets to connect banks, mobile money, wallets, and e-commerce in real time.
- Risk-based inclusion: Use tiered KYC and proportional oversight to widen access while maintaining AML/CFT and consumer-protection safeguards.
- Operational resilience & user trust: Require incident reporting, BCP/DR testing, transparent fees, and effective redress so first-time digital users stay protected.
- Local co-creation: Invite Somali providers to propose technical fixes for integration; prioritize evidence-based policymaking and structured consultations to reduce delivery risk and keep value onshore.

Expert Presentations

Following Panel Discussion 3, the forum featured expert talks that translated multi-stakeholder principles into actionable steps for Somalia's internet governance. In line with the report's structure, these presentations focused on evidence, inclusivity, and defining clear next steps for policy development and implementation.

Mr. Mohamamed Ali Mohamud, Director of Somali Network Information Center (SONIC) emphasized that SONIC's role in managing the .so domain is key to building a resilient national Internet infrastructure. He highlighted its significance for digital identity, cybersecurity, and compliance with international governance standards. He also discussed the importance of involving multiple stakeholders to bring diverse perspectives, foster trust, and ensure accountability. Additionally, he pointed out specific challenges Somalia faces, such as legal gaps, infrastructure limitations, and capacity needs.



He proposed a collaborative approach for the future, involving the development of inclusive policies through organized cooperation among government, business, civil society, the technical sector, and academia. This encompasses SONIC's role in promoting national priorities—such as managing domains, encouraging innovation, and ensuring fair access and participation in international policy forums. The call to action

urged partners to collaborate in establishing a predictable governance framework that fosters the digital economy while safeguarding user interests.

Mr. Hussein Sabrie, Chief Communication Officer of SomaliREN, identified the main challenge as balancing the protection of free expression—which fuels innovation and inclusion—with the need to regulate harmful content to preserve cultural and religious values. He argued that lasting solutions require cooperation among government agencies, online platforms, civil society, and religious and cultural leaders, all operating according to principles of inclusivity, transparency, cultural awareness, and digital literacy.



Translating principles into action, he emphasized localized moderation (such as Somali-language tools and in-country expertise), public-private partnerships with major platforms, user-centric reporting channels, and ethically designed AI that understands the Somali context. He warned that weak legal frameworks, infrastructure limitations, and low trust can undermine moderation efforts if processes are not transparent and subject to appeal.

Mr. Abdirazak Abdirahman, representing the Somali Non-state Actors (SONSA), based his discussion on the international consensus that the same rights people have offline should also be protected online. He outlined five policy pillars:

Access & Equity; Security & Digital Civic Space; Responsible Data Use & Privacy; Automation & the Future of Work; and Governance. He emphasized that governance respecting rights requires transparent processes, accountability, and accessible remedies.



He pinpointed key threats such as disinformation, spyware, unclear data practices, and heightened risks to women and marginalized groups. He advocated for coalition-building, capacity enhancement, and direct negotiations with governments and corporations to develop enforceable safeguards.

Dr. Yahye Abukar, Director of the Center for Research and Development at SIMAD University, shared a practical data governance strategy that directly connects policies to everyday data management tasks such as collection, storage, usage, sharing, and deletion. The strategy emphasizes establishing clear roles and responsibilities, using risk-based data classification, integrating privacy measures from the outset, and performing impact assessments before launching new projects. To ensure data accuracy and trustworthiness, it also highlights the importance of effective incident response plans, routine audits, and standardized metadata procedures.



He also mentioned that sector-specific rules should be consolidated into a single comprehensive framework. This would ensure that areas like telecom, finance, health, and education adhere to shared safeguards while also addressing their distinct risks. Uniform regulations—such as obtaining clear consent, having lawful grounds for data processing, justified localization measures, and independent oversight—are essential for fostering innovation, building public trust, and facilitating international collaboration.

Throughout the presentations, speakers emphasized three key priorities: 1) implementing formal, inclusive processes that incorporate input from multiple stakeholders; 2) adopting rights-respecting approaches to content and data that are transparent and can be appealed; and 3) investing in local capabilities—policy, technical, and civic—to translate principles into everyday practice. These priorities reflect the forum's structure, which combines expert talks with multi-stakeholder debate to produce actionable results.

7) Policy Recommendations

- Effective Internet governance depends on the inclusive involvement of all key stakeholders: governments, the private sector, civil society, academia, and the technical community.
- Each of these groups offers unique perspectives, expertise, and priorities to the policy-making process.
- A multi-stakeholder approach encourages policies that are more balanced, inclusive, and representative of the various interests influencing the digital ecosystem. This approach is key to fostering trust and maintaining an open, secure, and resilient Internet.
- Long-term strategies to fight misinformation should emphasize enhancing education systems and encouraging digital literacy.
- Civil society organizations play a crucial role in advocating for public interests, particularly for marginalized and underrepresented communities.
- A robust multi-stakeholder framework should be backed by mechanisms ensuring transparency, ongoing consultations, and accessible appeal procedures.
- Academic institutions play a crucial role in evidence-based Internet governance. They produce trustworthy data, evaluate policy effects, and develop innovative solutions through independent research, observatories, and experimental sandboxes.
- Ethical reporting, fact-checking, and editorial independence are essential in preventing the spread of fake news. Journalists and media organizations must follow codes of conduct that stress accuracy, fairness, and responsibility.
- In the Fintech sector, interoperability plays a vital role in promoting financial inclusion and enabling real-time connections. Authorities and regulators should encourage the adoption of open API standards, unified settlement systems, and shared clearing infrastructure to facilitate smooth integration among banks, mobile money services, wallets, and e-commerce platforms.

8) Closing Session



Mr. Ahmed Ali Salad, Deputy Director General of the National Communications Authority of Somalia, thanked the participants for their discussions and recognized the contributions from government agencies, operators, fintech companies, academia, civil society, media, and development partners. He mentioned that the Forum successfully achieved its goals: fostering informed dialogue on content regulation, multistakeholder governance, and fintech/e-commerce oversight; balancing online safety with freedom of expression; and enhancing partnerships to support Somalia's Transformation Plan 2025–2029.

He emphasized key points: content rules need to be transparent, fair, and balanced; policies should be co-developed with all stakeholders, incorporating consultation, transparency, and appeal processes; education and digital literacy are vital long-term solutions to misinformation; academia should underpin policy with neutral evidence via observatories, shared datasets, and sandboxes; ethical reporting is crucial to prevent false news propagation; and in fintech, interoperability—through open APIs and shared settlement targets—will promote inclusion and competition.

9) Annex A: SIGF Agenda



SOMALIA INTERNET
Governance Forum

**Madasha Hab-Maamul ka ee
internet-ka Soomaaliya**



30 Nofeembar,
01 Diseembar, 2024



Jaziira Hotel, Muqdisho
Soomaaliya

AGENDA

Location: Mogadishu, Somalia | Venue: Jazeera Hotel Palace

Date: 30 November - 1 December 2024

DAY ONE: SATURDAY November 30, 2024

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Welcome & Registration
9:00 AM - 9:10 AM	Introduction and Housekeeping followed by the grand opening featuring Quran recitation, the National Anthem, and entertainment. MC: Mohamed Muhyadin
9:10 AM - 9:20 AM	Somalia IGF 2024: Shaping a Collaborative Digital Future Presenter - Liban Abdulkadir
9:20 AM - 9:25 AM	A short documentary showcasing Somalia's Internet Journey & Success (3 Minutes)
9:25 AM - 9:35 AM	Keynote Address: Shaping the Future of Digital Governance: A Collaborative Multi-stakeholder Approach H.E Mustafa Y. SHEIK Director General, National Communications Authority
9:35 AM - 9:40 AM	Opening Statement HE. Mohamed Adam Moalim Ali Minister of Communication and Technology Official opening by the Chief Guest H.E. Salah Jama Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Government of Somalia

10:30 AM - 12:30 PM SESSION 1	Panel Discussion: Balancing Content Regulation and Freedom on the Internet (1 hour and 30 minutes) Focus: Navigating the complexities of regulating online content while ensuring freedom of expression. The discussion will cover the challenges of misinformation and harmful content. Moderator: Aweys Hassan Mohamed Title: Media and Communications Specialist Organization Panelists: 1. H.E. Daud Aweys – Minister of Information and Culture and Tourism 2. H.E. Mohamed Adam Moallim – Minister of Communications and Technology (MOCT) 3. H.E. Farah Abdulkadir – Minister of Education 4. Dr. Ibrahim Mohamed Mursal – Mogadishu University President 5. Mohamed Abdulkadir Adow - Deputy Director for Partnership (IRISE Hub) Open Floor Discussion Q & A from participants
12.10 PM- 1.20 PM	GROUP PHOTOS, SIDE INTERVIEWS, NETWORKING LUNCH AND PRAYER BREAK
1:30 PM- 1:50 PM	Presentation: Exploring Polarizing Issues in Somalia for Better Digital Governance Context: A critical examination of divisive topics in Somalia’s digital landscape, focusing on strategies to foster inclusive governance and mitigate online conflict. Presenter: Dr. Fuad Mire Hassan
1:55 PM - 2:15 PM	Presentation: Internet Governance in the Era of A Presenter: Ahmed Osman Ali Deputy Rector, Zamzam University of Science and Technology (ZUST) Co-founder and the President of AI Somalia
2:20 - 2:40 PM	Presentation: Bridging the Digital Divide: Ensuring Inclusive Access to Technology for All Abdifatah Osman, ICT4D Coordinator, OXFAM
2:30 - 2:50 PM	Conclusion of the first day: Networking, Coffee and Interviews

DAY TWO: Sunday– 01 December 2024	
TIME	ACTIVITY
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Welcome & Registration.
9:00 AM - 9:15 AM	Introduction and Housekeeping followed by the grand opening featuring Quran recitation, and recap of day 1. MC: Mohamed Muhyadin
SESSION 2 9:15 AM- 10:50 AM	Presentation : Enhancing Internet Governance Through Multi-Stakeholder Engagement (10 minutes) Context: A brief presentation discussing how engaging multiple stakeholders can enhance internet governance and the legal framework for internet governance in Somalia and current hindrances/challenges. Presenter: Mohamed Ali Mohamud Director, Somali Network Information Center (SONIC) ----- Panel Discussion 2: The Role of Multi-Stakeholder Engagement (80 minutes) Focus: Exploring frameworks for effective Internet governance that fosters sustainable development in Somalia. Panelists will discuss best practices and regulatory strategies. Moderator: Nasro Abdi Osman Communication Specialist Panelists: 1. Liban Abdulkadir - ICT Regulatory Expert, NCA 2. Abdirizak Abdirahman - Somali Non-State Actors (SONSA) 3. Dr. Mohamed Omar Abdullahi - Dean Faculty of Computing, SIMAD 4. Ahmed Isse - Deputy General Manager – Somtel 5. Hussein Sabrie - Chief Communications Officer, SomaliREN Open Floor Discussion – Using Slido & In-person <i>Q & A from participants (20 minutes)</i>
10:40 AM - 11:20 AM	NETWORKING COFFEE BREAK
11:20 PM - 11:40 PM	Presentation: Mohamed Ali Mohamud
11:40 PM - 12:00 PM	Presentation : Abdifatah Osman
12:00 PM - 12:25 PM	Presentation : Hussein Sabrie
12.10 PM- 1.20 PM	GROUP PHOTOS, SIDE INTERVIEWS, NETWORKING LUNCH AND PRAYER BREAK

SESSION 3 1:20 PM- 2:40 PM	Presentation 3: Mobile Money for All: Equal Access & Expanding Financial Inclusion through Digital Solutions (10 minutes) Context: Insights into global trends in fintech that could shape the Somali market, focusing on technology and consumer needs. Panel Discussion 2: Fintech Governance (80 minutes) Focus: Exploring the growth of fintech solutions and e-commerce platforms in Somalia, highlighting regulatory challenges and opportunities for innovation. The discussion will include the market regulatory framework affecting telecommunication & mobile money providers and third-party service providers that rely on fintech technology. Moderator: <i>Ibrahim Noor, Director - SAFICT</i> Panelists: 1. Mahad Mohamud Abdullahi, Director of Licensing and Supervision, Central Bank 2. Dr. Abdinur Mohamed Ali – NEC Advisor 3. Mohamed Ali Adam, Head of Premier Wallet 4. Deeq Mohamed Afrika, Bixi, CEO 5. Abdirahman Adan Ali - Keshflip, CEO 6. Ilyas Abdikarim Noor – Hormud - CCO Open Floor Discussion – Using Slido & In-person Q & A from participants (limited to 5 questions) (20 minutes)
2:40 PM- 3:00 PM	Presentation: Hussein Sabrie
3:00 PM- 3:20 PM	Presentation: Ahmed Osman Ali
3:20 PM- 3:40 PM	Presentation: Mohamed Amin Mohamud
4:00 PM- 4:10 PM	Expert Commentary: Conference Recap & Policy Action Recommendations Delivered by: Forum Rapporteur
4:15PM	Closing remarks –Ahmed Ali Salad - Deputy Director General, National Communications Authority –Networking, Official Event Photo Group, and Interviews.
DAY 2 WRAP-UP	

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