

AhA notes, Setting the scene and goals of the event 2nd African Forum on Cybercrime and CoE hub: Cybercrime investigations in practice.

- Ambassador, Hilde HARDEMAN, Head of the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments.
- Mr. Alexander SEGER, Head of the Cybercrime Division of the Council of Europe and Executive Secretary of the Cybercrime Convention Committee.
- Baroness Beeban Tania KIDRON, Member of the House of Lords, Parliament of the United Kingdom.
- Her Excellency Amani ABOU-ZEID, Commissioner Infrastructure and Energy, African Union Commission.

Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen, good day,

Digital technologies expand the possibilities for people to enjoy freedoms and the right to access information and knowledge. However, **reacting to threats such as cybercrime has become the bane of governments, companies, and organisations worldwide.** Society and its organisations require trust to optimally function. Trust that is predicated on the confidentiality, integrity, and availability, as appropriate of information, especially as data is increasingly digitised. Trust also requires an appreciation that the rule of law extends to cyberspace and that perpetrators of cyber malfeasance will be brought to justice, and face appropriate sanction, in a timely manner.

Cybercrime is illegal activity that either targets and/ or uses a computer, computer network or related devices as defined by legislation. It can be committed by individuals, organizations and nation-states for money, ego, influence, espionage or political purposes. **As we witness the escalation of cybercrime, it is imperative that we strengthen law enforcement, judiciary, and related stakeholders.** Additionally, more Africans are getting connected as we speak, and include but are not limited to roadside food vendors, street traders, itinerant farmers, youth, intelligentsia, and decision makers who now rely increasingly on digital services.

Given the above, the African Union Cyber Security Expert Group (AUCSEG) was established by, and reports to, the African Union Commission (AUC), Department of Infrastructure and Energy through its Information Society Division. **The responsibilities of the AUCSEG are to advise the AUC, and by extension African Chiefs of State, on technical, policy, legal and other related Cyber security matters at the national, regional, and continental levels.**

Our goal is to **Protect Digital Africa**, and by extension all people, because the cyber, like other global environment's, is only as strong as its weakest link. Thus, we appreciate that the African Forum on Cybercrime and Council of Europe (CoE) hubs provides unique learning opportunities, and we look forward to interrogating issues related to:

1. **Cybercrime policies and legislative updates in Africa**, especially in the context of recent regional court rulings striking out clauses of national cybercrime legislation. It is imperative that we **support African legislatures and strategic decision makers** in drafting appropriate inter-linked and coherent policies, legislation and regulations based on democratic values, empirical evidence and avoid negative impacts of draconian legislation on society, development, and wellbeing.
2. **Cybercrime investigations in practice** CoE side hub is envisaged to enhance participants knowledge, skills, and abilities by providing them with insight and learning about actionable activities and procedures related to

bringing perpetrators of Cybercrimes to book. This is important given the human capacity, infrastructural and resource challenges that we face. Participants look forward to:

- a. Gaining insight into practical aspects of cybercrime investigations including digital forensics.
 - b. Updates on law enforcement partnerships and platforms that enhance cybercrime investigations.
 - c. Guidance on how to gain, subsidised or preferably free, **access to resources** like the [Cybercrime Investigation Body of Knowledge \(CIBOK\)](#) and associated capacity building resources.
3. **International cooperation on cybercrime and electronic evidence** given that building trust and addressing cybercrime requires global multi-stakeholder collaboration, as one weak link potentially undermines global value chains. And it is thus imperative, that Africa, its nations, organisations, institutions, and peoples are not the weak link. This where the strengths of the AUC, CoE, European Union, INTERPOL, UNODC, FCO, GFCE, ECOWAS, OCWAR-C, Commonwealth Secretariat, and other partners of this event can optimally **foster multi-stakeholder collaboration in the best interests of humanity**, and Africa in particular.
4. In addition, participants may also seek to:
- a. Understand new measures such as the proposed CoE enhanced cooperation and disclosure of electronic evidence as a potentially new protocol and future update of the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime. In this context, the resource persons can provide us, with **insight into the process, relating to WHEN and how best to make updates to similar conventions**, should the need arise.
 - b. **Brainstorm on operationalising new strategies, legal measures, and long-term initiatives to combat cybercrime across Africa.**
 - c. Consider if those who direct or implement state ordered “internet shutdowns” or suspending of social media platforms in peacetime, in the absence of empirically verifiable threats, be construed as incurring liability in the context of human rights, international humanitarian law, and evolving global cyber norms and standards? What responsibilities and obligations **should states have for the loss of income/livelihood to those negatively affected by such interventions?**

Excellencies Colleagues, ladies, and gentlemen, **we must protect all law-abiding virtual stakeholders, prevent cyber impunity, and ensure digital justice while continually factoring the needs, aspirations, and concerns of the underserved, unserved and unborn** because they too must live with the outcomes of the knowledge sharing and related decisions that we make today and during this important event.

I wish us all fruitful interactions and constructive relationships.

Thank you.

Abdul-Hakeem Ajijola
Chair, African Union Cybersecurity Experts Group (AUCSEG)

