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## Eastern African countries meet in Mauritius to address the growing threat of cybercrime in the region

**10-12 July 2017**

**Le Méridien Hotel, Pointe aux Piments, Mauritius**

*The Government of Mauritius, the International Association of Prosecutors (IAP) and the Council of Europe will jointly organize the East Africa Regional Conference on Cybercrime and Electronic Evidence, gathering representatives of 12 countries in the region to improve international cooperation against cybercrime.*

With more than half of the global population now online, governments also become responsible for their capacity to protect the rights of their citizens and to maintain the rule of law in cyberspace. The African continent currently has the highest number of Internet users in the world, after Asia. Increased access to digital tools has created a significant growth in terms of opportunities for development, as well as threats.

Recent research shows that the Eastern African region is particularly vulnerable to the emerging threat of cybercrime, with countries such as Nigeria, Malawi or Uganda ranking among the top ten most exposed countries on the global level. The higher vulnerability in this region can be linked to multiple causes: the overall lag, compared to other African states, in the legislative response to cybercrime, low cybersecurity infrastructure investment or criminal justice authorities' limited experience in handling cybercrime cases and electronic evidence.

However, more and more East African states are calling for regional harmonization of laws, in line with international standards. Regional initiatives, such as the African Union's Malabo Convention, as well as national legislation of the East African countries (where it exists) are largely based on the Council of Europe's [Budapest Convention on Cybercrime](#), the only international treaty on this topic.

**Mauritius was the first African country to join the Budapest Convention**, also as part of its vision towards becoming a SMART island with a safe and more secure digital environment. As part of the [GLACY+ project on Global Action on Cybercrime Extended](#), a joint initiative of the European Union and the Council of Europe, Mauritius is now committed to be one of the African hubs for regional capacity building on cybercrime.

As part of this role, the Government of Mauritius will host the East Africa Regional Conference on Cybercrime and Electronic Evidence. Three messages are at the core of the event:

- (1) Cybercrime undermine the social and economic development opportunities of information technologies, in Eastern Africa as in the rest of the world. **Legislation on cybercrime and electronic evidence in line with international standards is key to face the cross-border nature of cybercrime and enable a coordinated response on the global level.**
- (2) Electronic evidence is potentially part of any offence. **Good practices to secure and analyse electronic evidence are available, should be shared and be used.** Digital investigations and prosecutions are a collaborative effort of investigators, forensic investigators and prosecutors.
- (3) **A major capacity building effort is needed at all levels to improve criminal justice capability** to effectively investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cybercrime cases and other offences involving electronic evidence.

The regional conference is co-organized together with the Government of Mauritius, the [Council of Europe](#) and the [Global Prosecutors E-Crime Network \(GPEN\)](#), the main conduit for the International Association of Prosecutors (IAP) that promotes the prosecution of cybercrime.

Both the Council of Europe and IAP have been conducting cyber capacity training for investigators, prosecutors and judges and other advisory and best practice sharing activities to strengthen the fight against cybercrime in the African region.

The 3-day regional event is expected to bring together around 40 representatives from 12 Eastern African countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mozambique, Seychelles, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe) as well as regional organizations such as the [African Union Commission](#) and [UNAFRI and also International Organizations such as the UNODC](#). Sessions are focused on best practices sharing among participants, with a particular focus on improving the technical knowledge and capacity of investigators and prosecutors to deal with the emerging challenges posed by the use of Darknet, virtual/crypto currencies or online money laundering techniques.

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## **About GLACY+ Global Action on Cybercrime Extended**

GLACY+ (2016-2020) is a Joint project of the European Union and the Council of Europe, aimed at strengthening the capacities of States worldwide to apply legislation on cybercrime and electronic evidence and enhance their abilities for effective international cooperation in this area. Currently, 8 countries from Africa, Latin America and the Asia/Pacific region – namely, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Mauritius, Morocco, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Tonga – benefit from project support and share their experience within their respective regions.

## **About the Global Prosecutors E-Crime Network (GPEN)**

The Global Prosecutors E-Crime Network (GPEN) was launched in 2008 with the aim of assisting all countries to establish a safe and secure online environment for users, by ensuring that prosecutors have the tools to deal effectively with cyber-crime. Under the umbrella of the International Association of Prosecutors (IAP), GPEN aims to enhance international cooperation and enable jurisdictions to develop a coordinated approach for dealing with e-crime that supports effective prosecutions and promotes the Cybercrime Convention.