

# World Summit on the Information Society Forum



The internet and access to government  
information: where do we stand and  
where should we go next?

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01

✓ **Establishment of WSIS:** i) Geneva in 2003 & ii) Tunis in 2005, “to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society”

02

✓ **2023 theme:** WSIS Action Lines for building back better and accelerating the achievement of the SDGs

03

✓ **Article 19**, of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights - “right to know” or “access to information”

04

✓ **IFLA’s vision:** A strong and united library field powering literate, informed and participative societies

05

✓ **SDG 12:** on libraries and knowledge centers “... Libraries are sustainable institutions; they share resources within communities and across borders, to ensure that everyone has access to information”

# Focus- e-government information for democratic engagement and participation

E-government information-	Open governance	Importance of e-government information-	Aims:	Stakeholders:	E-governance in Africa	Outlets
use of ICT to provide information and improve the delivery of government services to the citizens	transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation	decision-making, budgetary, government policies, poverty eradication and scientific innovations & research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) minimize the burden of public administration and the business activities to its citizens</li> <li>ii) bridge gap between urban and rural populations</li> <li>iii) avail and improve the delivery of government services to the citizens to all citizens wherever and whenever needed</li> <li>iv) enhance transparency and accountability in the delivery of government services</li> </ul>	Governments, NGO's, civil societies, citizens plus other development partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) government policies</li> <li>ii) citizenry participation</li> <li>iii) repackaged information</li> <li>...</li> </ul>	libraries, government departments & related information management

# Libraries and access to government information

**Libraries as knowledge hubs:** IT training hubs; bridge -digital, skills & language divides

**Types of libraries that support government information** – government libraries & depository libraries – ensure data quality, coordinate & migrate information to appropriate databases/repositories. To grassroots level

**Guided by:** comprehensive government portals; relevant Government Acts of Parliament; national policies (e.g. Kenya Freedom of Information Bill, 2007; bills e.g. e-transaction bill; strategies; AU Agenda 2030; Agenda 2063; SDG's ; legal frameworks

**Challenges:** levels of classification of government information- 'confidential' labeled documents ( a legalistic obstruction to the flow of information) ; poor ICT infrastructure, poor government policies, digital divide & inadequate human skill; lack of audit systems that act as check and balances on existing government structures, undemocratic political transitions, insecurities

Knowledge rich global = a knowledge economy, informed citizenry

Libraries allow use and reuse of information for new knowledge for evidence based societal decisions. **How?** Enable access to e-information through proper selection, classification, coding, repackaging, access and dissemination of authentic, authoritative, complete, reliable, relevant, timely e-government information

Call to support libraries

Support ICT infrastructure & implementation of universal library management systems and repositories that support open access to resources to enhance access and sharing of resource regardless of geographical location

Enhances “a **one stop-shop**” for global access to authentic, relevant, timely information and reduces duplication of efforts thus cutting on costs

# Recommendations & way forward

- ❑ Government responsibility-collect, maintain and disseminate public information.
- ❑ Loopy for efficient and effective system of governance and flows of information & knowledge
- ❑ Government's MUST : a) develop effective and functional websites for accessing information & improved service delivery. b) ensure affordable and reliable telecommunication and electricity connectivity. c) accelerate information technology literacy for citizens. d) developed infrastructures such as computer hardware and software. e) increase library budgets/funding. f) avail & support adequate skilled human resources to collect and organize information. g) developed government policies
- ❑ Emphasis on Libraries as: IT training hubs; bridge -digital, skills & language divides, knowledge sharing- documentation of best practices, success stories and lessons learnt + use of knowledge sustainability tools - story telling
- ❑ stakeholders to embrace oral literature – songs, drama, story telling
- ❑ Policy support/framework on access, and opening up government information for public through public/education/school online libraries

Thank  
you