



**MANO RIVER UNION  
INTERNET GOVERNANCE  
FORUM**

# **Comprehensive Report Mano River Union Internet Governance Forum (MRU IGF) 2024**

**Held in Freetown, Sierra Leone  
Date: October 19-20, 2024  
Venue: New Brookfield Hotel, Freetown**

**Prepared by  
MRU IGF Secretariat -Committee**

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## **Executive Summary**

The **Maiden Mano River Union Internet Governance Forum (MRU IGF)**, held from **October 19-20, 2024**, in **Freetown, Sierra Leone**, was a historic and transformative event. It brought together a wide array of stakeholders from across the MRU countries—**Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea**—to discuss critical internet governance issues and collaborate on the digital transformation agenda for the region.

The event featured insightful panel discussions, technical workshops, and youth consultations, which laid the groundwork for sustained cooperation on issues such as digital infrastructure, financial inclusion, digital literacy, cybersecurity, and public policy in the digital age. Over **200 participants** for the two days attended the event, with **multi-stakeholder representation** from government, private sector, civil society, academia, and technical communities.

A comprehensive **Communiqué** was developed and circulated to the respective governments of the MRU countries, summarizing key recommendations and action points to be factored into their national digital transformation strategies. This report highlights the key outcomes, expenses, recommendations, and the road ahead for future MRU IGF events, particularly the 2025 edition.

## **Background to This Report**

This report serves as a formal documentation of the inaugural Mano River Union Internet Governance Forum (MRU IGF), held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, as part of efforts to advance internet governance discussions within the Mano River Union region. The event brought together stakeholders from government, civil society, academia, the private sector, and youth groups to address critical issues related to digital inclusion, internet access, cybersecurity, and ICT policy harmonization across the MRU member states.

Aligned with the mandate of the United Nations Internet Governance Forum (UN IGF), this report highlights key outcomes, challenges, and recommendations from the event while underscoring its significance in fostering regional collaboration and aligning with global internet governance priorities.

Through this submission to the UN IGF Secretariat, we aim to showcase the event's impact, foster greater visibility for regional internet governance initiatives, and contribute to ongoing global discussions on equitable and sustainable digital transformation.

## **MRU Member States: Brief History & Formation**

Formed in 1973, the Mano River Union (MRU) is a political and economic coalition among Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire, aimed at fostering regional peace, collaboration, and sustainable development. In the context of digital transformation, these member states have recognized the importance of a dedicated platform to address regional internet governance issues. The MRU IGF, therefore, was established as a unifying force to address the digital divide, cybersecurity, and policy gaps unique to these states, while aligning with global internet governance frameworks.

MRU countries share common socio-economic characteristics and challenges, making their collective approach essential for formulating policies and initiatives that enhance digital inclusivity and resilience across the region. Through the MRU IGF, these member states collaboratively explore solutions for creating a more equitable digital future, ensuring the distinct needs of this sub-sub-region are represented in global internet policy discussions.

## **MRU NRI Members**

The MRU IGF is a unique initiative within the ecosystem of West Africa, positioning itself as a sub-sub-regional NRI (National and Regional Initiative) within the larger framework of the West Africa IGF. It comprises Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire, each country represented as an individual NRI and yet united under the MRU IGF. The MRU IGF serves to represent the specific internet governance concerns of this underserved sub-region, adding depth to the voices heard at the West Africa IGF and beyond.

By addressing the distinct needs of the MRU countries, MRU IGF brings valuable insights and perspectives to the global internet governance dialogue. Our purpose is not to diverge from the West Africa IGF but rather to enrich it by ensuring that the concerns of our communities are visible, acknowledged, and addressed.

## **2. Objectives and Purpose of the MRU IGF**

The **MRU IGF 2024** sought to:

- Strengthen multistakeholder dialogue on internet governance in the MRU region.
- Identify key challenges and opportunities for digital transformation.
- Promote cooperation among MRU countries to ensure sustainable digital development.

- Engage young people in digital literacy, skills development, and the digital economy.
- Foster a secure, reliable, and inclusive digital environment across the MRU region.

### Specific Goals

- Foster discussions on **digital infrastructure** challenges and solutions.
- Promote understanding of **FinTech, digital financial inclusion**, and related regulatory frameworks.
- Highlight the importance of **digital rights and security**, with a focus on vulnerable populations.
- Amplify youth voices through the **MRU Youth IGF**, allowing young participants to engage in internet governance dialogues.

### Program Overview

The two-day forum was structured around key panel discussions, technical workshops, and youth-focused sessions. Below is a breakdown of the core sessions and topics covered:

Session	Topic	Speakers/Facilitators
<b>Panel 1</b>	Digital Infrastructure Development in the MRU Region	Samuel Yeboah (C Squared), Sankoumba Kourouma (Guinea ISOC), Rep. MoCIT-SL, Rep. Zoodlabs
<b>Panel 2</b>	Media Literacy on Misinformation and Disinformation in the MRU region Panel	Dr. Victor Monino , Millicent Karbgo , Cecilia Sessay ( SLBC ) , Peterking Quaye
<b>Panel 3</b>	Cybersecurity in MRU Region	Dr. Martain Koyabe
<b>Panel 4</b>	Digital Connectivity in the MRU region	Zobb SL , Dr. Abudlai Sanko ( Govt.) Ajara Marie Bomah
<b>Panel 5</b>	FinTech and Digital Financial Inclusion	Ivan Kargbo (ISOC), Oluwatosin Ayorinde (Limkokwing University), Samuel Kpartor (FLY), Dennis Kromah (YARD Liberia), Sorieba Daffae (Monieme SL), Rep. MoCIT-SL
<b>Special Presentation #1</b>	Ms. Khadija Umar	PIN Senior Programmes Manager -Anglophone Africa
<b>Special Presentation # 2</b>	Dr. Martin Koyabe	GFCE – Cyber Resilience Capacity Building for Africa- MRU Region Cyber Maturity Level
<b>Special Presentation #3</b>	C-Squared Africa -Digital Connectivity in Liberia and impact on digital public goods in MRU region the case of Liberia	Samuel Yeboah (C Squared): Chief Technical Officer C-Squared -Ghana
<b>Special Presentation #5</b>	Guinea IGF Country Progress and Engagement	NRI Coordinator for Guinea – • Sankoumba Kourouma & Guinea ISOC
<b>Special Presentation #6</b>	Liberia IGF Country Progress and Engagement	Peterking Quaye Rep & NRI Coordinator
<b>Special Presentation # 7</b>	Sierra Leone IGF Country Report & Sierra Leone IGF	Ajara Marie Bomah - Sierra Leone IGF NRI Coordinator
<b>Technical Workshop # 1</b>	IPv6 Deployment and DNSSEC Implementation	Mr. Brice Abba (AFRINIC),
<b>Technical Workshop # 2</b>	ICANN -CcTLD : Strengthening Internet Governance through Secure and Reliable Systems	Yaovi Autohun – Africa Engagement Manager ICANN representative
<b>Youth Session</b> MRU Youth IGF	Digital Literacy for Youth Presentation	Glen Mends (Celestial Clicks), Ivan Benjamin (UNDP), M'mah Zombo (Korlie Limited), Amara Kargbo, Guinea Youth IGF Rep

The forum also featured consultations on **Media Literacy**, addressing misinformation and disinformation, as well as key discussions on cybersecurity.

#### 4. Key Speakers /Panelist /Key Outcomes and Recommendations

##### Key Speakers /Panelist Points :

##### Panel 1: Digital Infrastructure Development in the MRU Region

- **Samuel Yeboah (C Squared):**  
Highlighted the need for regional broadband expansion and the importance of cross-border collaboration to improve connectivity in rural areas. Emphasized public-private partnerships as a key driver for digital infrastructure growth.
- **Sankoumba Kourouma (Guinea ISOC):**  
Discussed the challenges of last-mile connectivity in Guinea and proposed innovative financing models, including universal service funds, to bridge the digital divide.
- **Dr. Saknoh Representative, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Sierra Leone):**  
Shared government initiatives aimed at increasing internet penetration in underserved areas and the progress of the national broadband strategy.
- **Agnes Jigba. Representative, Zoodlabs:**  
Stressed the importance of modern data centers and scalable network solutions to meet the growing demand for internet services in the MRU region.

##### Panel 2: FinTech and Digital Financial Inclusion

- **Ivan Kargbo (ISOC):**  
Advocated for harmonized regulatory frameworks to enable seamless cross-border financial transactions in the MRU region. Highlighted the role of mobile money in empowering rural communities.
- **Dr. Victor Monini (IPAM /University of Sierra Leone ):**  
Addressed the role of educational institutions in fostering financial literacy and creating awareness about digital financial tools among youth.
- **Samuel Kpartor (FLY):**  
Presented case studies showcasing how mobile banking has transformed access to credit for small businesses, particularly for women entrepreneurs.
- **Dennis Kromah (YARD Liberia):**  
Stressed the need for robust consumer protection mechanisms to safeguard digital financial transactions and foster trust in digital platforms.

##### Technical Workshop: IPv6 Deployment and DNSSEC Implementation

- **Mr. Brice Abba (AFRINIC):**  
Delivered a hands-on workshop on the practical steps for deploying IPv6 and ensuring secure internet naming systems through DNSSEC.
  - **Key takeaway: Urged MRU countries to adopt IPv6 to future-proof their networks and avoid IP address shortages.**

##### Workshop Presentation :

##### Mr . Yaovi Ahunton -Vice President for Engagement Africa- ICANN Representative:

Provided an overview of global DNSSEC adoption trends and emphasized the importance of training local technical experts in advanced cybersecurity protocols.

## **Session by ICANN Official: Strengthening Internet Governance through Secure and Reliable Systems**

- **ICANN Representative:**

Delivered an insightful presentation on the importance of secure and reliable internet systems to foster trust in the digital ecosystem.

### **Key Points in his presentation /Highlights:**

1. **DNSSEC Implementation:**

- Emphasized the critical role of DNS Security Extensions (DNSSEC) in preventing DNS-related cyberattacks such as cache poisoning and spoofing.
- Provided an overview of global adoption trends and encouraged MRU countries to prioritize DNSSEC integration within their national frameworks.

2. **IPv6 Deployment:**

- Highlighted IPv6 as a future-proof solution to the growing demand for IP addresses, addressing the limitations of IPv4.
- Stressed the importance of training local technical experts and creating regional task forces to accelerate IPv6 adoption.

3. **Capacity Building:**

- Urged governments and stakeholders to invest in capacity-building initiatives that empower technical communities and policymakers with advanced knowledge of internet governance.

4. **Collaboration Opportunities:**

- Announced ICANN's continued support for capacity-building workshops and stakeholder engagement in the MRU region.
- Encouraged partnerships with regional organizations to strengthen internet governance structures and enhance technical resilience.

5. **Youth Engagement:**

- Highlighted ICANN's youth programs, which aim to empower young people to participate actively in internet governance discussions and contribute to policy recommendations.

### **MRU Youth IGF Engagement Session :**

#### **Youth Session: Digital Literacy for Youth**

- **Glen Mends (Celestial Clicks):**

Encouraged digital entrepreneurship among youth, suggesting the establishment of community tech hubs to foster innovation.

- **Ivan Benjamin (UNDP):**

Highlighted the role of digital skills training in addressing unemployment and reducing youth migration in the MRU region.

**M'mah Zombo (Korlie Limited):**

Shared success stories of youth-led initiatives in digital literacy and advocated for increased funding for youth-driven tech projects.

- **Amara Kargbo (Guinea Youth IGF Representative):**

Spoke about the impact of the MRU Youth IGF in amplifying young voices and creating actionable recommendations for internet governance.

### **Consultation: Sierra Leone Women in Journalism .President , Millicent Kargbo**

#### **Media Literacy and Cybersecurity**

- **Facilitators:**

- Stressed the role of media literacy in combating misinformation and disinformation.
- Discussed the importance of harmonized cybersecurity frameworks to address emerging threats.
- Recommended strengthening collaboration among MRU countries to implement effective cybersecurity measures.

### **Recommendation :**

The **Maiden MRU IGF** has set a solid foundation for collaborative efforts in advancing digital governance in the Mano River Union region. The forum highlighted the unique challenges faced by **Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone**, while also presenting actionable solutions that could drive digital transformation in these countries. The strong **youth engagement** and cross-sector collaboration were major highlights of the event, demonstrating the commitment of all stakeholders to fostering an inclusive digital future.

### **Digital Infrastructure**

The panel on **Digital Infrastructure Development** identified several key challenges, including the lack of robust infrastructure in rural areas, limited broadband penetration, and the need for stronger public-private partnerships. It was recommended that:

- Governments collaborate with the private sector to implement **regional broadband infrastructure** projects.
- A **regional roaming protocol** should be fast-tracked to reduce costs and improve connectivity across MRU countries.
- National governments should explore **innovative financing models** to enhance infrastructure development.

### **FinTech and Financial Inclusion**

Discussions on **FinTech** and **financial inclusion** highlighted the importance of **mobile money** and **digital banking** as tools for economic empowerment, especially for women and rural populations. The forum recommended:

- Harmonizing **regulatory frameworks** for digital financial services across MRU countries to ensure cross-border operability.
- Strengthening **consumer protection** mechanisms to safeguard against cyber fraud.
- Expanding **digital financial literacy programs**, particularly for underserved communities.

### **Digital Literacy and Youth Empowerment**

The **MRU Youth IGF** provided a platform for young participants to discuss the **digital divide** and how education can promote digital literacy. Major recommendations included:

- Expanding **digital literacy** and skills development programs in primary and secondary schools.
- Encouraging **youth entrepreneurship** in the tech sector through incubators and digital hubs.
- Enhancing access to affordable internet services for students and young entrepreneurs.

### **Cybersecurity and Digital Rights**

The technical workshop on **IPv6 deployment and DNSSEC** provided participants with practical knowledge on securing the internet's naming system. It was recommended that:

- **National cybersecurity strategies** should be updated to reflect modern threats and risks, with a focus on implementing **DNSSEC**.
- **Data privacy laws** should be harmonized across MRU countries to ensure the protection of citizens' data in line with international standards.

**Strengthen Regional Collaboration:** Governments of the MRU region should deepen cooperation on **digital infrastructure**, cybersecurity, and regulatory harmonization.

1. **Expand Digital Literacy Programs:** Increased investment is needed in digital literacy and skills development for both youth and vulnerable groups.



2. **Promote Public-Private Partnerships:** Infrastructure projects should be driven by **public-private partnerships** to ensure sustainability and scalability.
3. **Institutionalize the MRU IGF:** The MRU IGF should be an annual event, with stronger involvement from **international bodies** such as **ICANN** and **AFRINIC** to ensure technical expertise and support.
4. **Implement Recommendations:** The Communiqué circulated at the event should be factored into national digital strategies, with clear timelines for implementation and regular monitoring.

## 8. Next Steps: Planning for MRU IGF 2025

- **Proposed Venue Selection:** The next MRU IGF is slated for **October 2025**, with discussions on hosting it in **Monrovia, Liberia**.
- **Budgeting and Sponsorship:** An estimated budget of **\$60,000** is anticipated for the next event, with plans to secure funding from more private sector partners and international bodies.
- **Program Development:** The 2025 edition will build on the successes of 2024, focusing on **emerging technologies, blockchain, and artificial intelligence** in the MRU region.

**Annexed - Photo Gallery ( Day 1 & Day 2 )**















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## MRU IGF 2024

Venue: New Brookfield Hotel Conference Hall -Freetown, Sierra Leone  
From October 9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> 2024 |Theme: "Bridging the Digital Divide for  
Inclusive Development."

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# MRU IGF 2024

Venue: New Brookfield Hotel Conference Hall -Freetown, Sierra Leone  
From October 9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> 2024 |Theme: "Bridging the Digital Divide for  
Inclusive Development."

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MANO RIVER UNION  
INTERNET  
GOVERNANCE  
FORUM

## MRU IGF 2024

Venue: New Brookfield Hotel Conference Hall -Freetown, Sierra Leone  
From October 9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> 2024 |Theme: "Bridging the Digital Divide for  
Inclusive Development."

### ATTENDANCE SHEET

DATE: 9 / Oct 2024

DAY 1

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12	Today	Day 2		
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**ATTENDANCE SHEET**

DATE: 9, Oct 2024

Day 1

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MANO RIVER UNION  
INTERNET  
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## MRU IGF 2024

Venue: New Brookfield Hotel Conference Hall -Freetown, Sierra Leone  
From October 9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> 2024 |Theme: "Bridging the Digital Divide for  
Inclusive Development."

MEDIA

### ATTENDANCE SHEET

DATE: 9/04/2024

DAY 1

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22	Henry Kargbo	Future Media	077-748647	
23	Sia Sansie	osadr w p	030770360	
24	Stanley Sunkoh	media	030996711	
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1:45 pm – 2:00 pm	<p><b>Panel Discussion 10: "Emerging Technologies and Their Impact on MRU Economies"</b></p> <p>❖ <b>Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Artificial Intelligence and Automation</li> <li>▪ Blockchain Technology for Governance</li> <li>▪ Internet of Things (IoT) for Sustainable Development</li> </ul> <p><b>Panelists :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Youth Sector – Blessing Kutubu , International Youth Advocate from Sierra Leone</li> <li>❖ Govt Sector : Hon. V. Marshall Sambola Assistant Minister for Administration- Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications</li> <li>❖ Technical Community – Vult SL</li> <li>❖ Academia : Sahid Mustapha – Lecturer Forah Bay University- Sierra Leone ** TBC</li> <li>❖ Civil Society : Guinea IGF Rep</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Edward William , Coordinator MRU IGF SL &amp; Internet Society SL Chapter ranking management member</p> <p>Rapporteur: MRU +ISOC Rapporteur Team</p>
1:45 pm – 2:00 pm	<p><b>Short Closing Ceremony and Reading of Communiqué from the Event</b></p>



## Annexed – Agenda for Program

<b>2:45 am -3:45- Technical Workshops</b>	<b>Technical Workshops: IPv6 deployment &amp; DNSSEC implementation, and broader internet ecosystem advancements.</b> <b>DNSSEC</b> (Domain Name System Security Extensions) will be covered comprehensively, with ICANN offering their expertise on DNSSEC at large, ensuring participants gain practical knowledge on securing the internet's naming system. These workshops aim to equip stakeholders with the tools and technical know-how to build a more secure, reliable, and inclusive digital infrastructure in the MRU region. <b>Facilitator/Presenter : Mr. Brice Ababa -Engagement Officer -AFRINIC</b> <b>Rapporteur: MRU + ISOC Rapporteur Team</b>
<b>Networking Session:</b> by ISOC Chapter - Sierra Leone	<b>Networking Session:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome Tradition Night (Sierra Leone Cultural Night) /Cultural Dance Troupe</li> <li>• Short Speech from the Minister of Communication, Innovation and Technology, Sierra Leone -TBC</li> </ul>
<b>Day 2: MRU Internet Government Forum – 10<sup>TH</sup> October 2024</b>	
<b>Morning Session</b>	
<b>9:00 am – 9:30 am</b>	<b>Registration</b>
<b>9:30 am – 10:00 am</b>	<b>RECAP OF DAY 1 - MC</b>
<b>10:00 am – 10:10 am</b>	<b>Special Remark by from APNIC Vice Chairperson- African Parliamentary Network on Internet Governance (APNIG)</b> <b>Hon Alhagie Mbow -Chairman West African Caucus Pan African Parliament</b> <b>Co-founder and Vice Chairperson- African Parliamentary Network on Internet Governance (APNIG)-UN MAG Member.</b>
<b>10:10 am- 10:15 am</b>	<b>Country Report – Presentation on Country their Internet Governance Forum hosting and milestone</b> <b>Sierra Leone IGF   Guinea IGF   Liberia IGF   Ivory Coast IGF</b>
<b>10:15 am – 11:30 am LIGHT TALK</b>	<b>Topic : "Digital Literacy and Tools for Digital Rights and Security in the MRU Region"</b> <b>Topic Overview:</b> This session will focus on the essential digital literacy skills required to navigate the online space while protecting digital rights. It will highlight practical tools available to enhance digital security and safeguard online freedom.
<b>Key Topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Understanding Digital Rights and Security:</b> How to empower individuals to protect their rights online, with a focus on privacy and security.</li> <li>• <b>Introduction to Ayeta:</b> A tool designed to enhance digital literacy and equip users with knowledge on online safety, digital rights, and secure practices and <b>Ripoti Usage</b></li> </ul> <b>Presenter/Facilitator : Khadijah El-Ussman   Senior Officer, Programmes   Paradigm Initiative</b> <b>Topics "A More Inclusive Internet: Introducing the New gTLD Applicant Support Program</b> <b>Overview :</b> This session will highlight ICANN's commitment to creating a more diverse and equitable internet by making the domain name space accessible to underserved communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Inclusive Access:</b> ICANN's gTLD Applicant Support Program helps underserved regions participate in the global domain name system.</li> </ul>	
<b>11:30 am – 12:00 pm Workshop/Panel Session</b>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Ivory Coast IGF – Fanny Salou ( Coordinator ) **</li> <li>❖ UN IGF Secretariat – Aijia Ajiengo, Focal Point UN IGF Secretariat</li> </ul>
	<b>GROUP PHOTO -ALL PARTICIPANTS</b>
12:00 pm –12:20 pm	<b>Lunch Break</b>
12:20 pm–1:00 pm	<b>Special Presentation by Partner : C Squared Presenter/Speaker : C Squared Official</b>
<b>PANEL SESSIONS</b>	<b>Panel Discussion 1: "Digital Infrastructure Development in the MRU Region"</b>
1:15 pm – 1:50 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Current Status and Challenges of Digital Infrastructure</li> <li>○ Strategies for Enhancing Broadband Connectivity</li> <li>○ Role of Public-Private Partnerships in Infrastructure Development</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Speakers and stakeholder group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Regional Stakeholder: C Squared - Samuel Yeboah -Group Chief Technology Officer C Squared</li> <li>○ Civil Society/ Technical : Sankounba Kourouma President -Guinea ISOC Chapter President</li> <li>○ Representative from Ministry of Communication Innovation and Technology – Republic of Sierra Leone MoCIT/SL</li> <li>○ Representative from Zoodlabs</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator: Cecelia Alice Sesay, Media Professional from Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation ,</b></p> <p><b>Rapporteur: MRU IGF Sec + ISOC SL Chapter Team</b></p>
	<b>HEALTH BREAK</b>
1:50 am – 2:45 am	<p><b>Panel Discussion 2: "Cybersecurity and Data Protection in the MRU Region"</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cyber Threat Landscape in MRU Countries</li> <li>○ National Cybersecurity Strategies</li> <li>○ Privacy Regulations and Data Protection Measures</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Technical Community</b> : Salieu Mansaray Member Sierra Leone IGF /ISOC Chapter SL ( REMOTE )</li> <li>○ <b>Academia</b>: Oluwatosin Babarinde Ayorinde Head of Faculty Limkokwing University ( Sierra Leone )</li> <li>○ <b>Govt /MoCIT</b> : Mr. Nicholas N. Johnson, Assistant Minister for Technical Services, Ministry of Post &amp; Telecommunications</li> <li>○ <b>International NGO</b> – Dr Martin Koyabe-Senior Project Manager   GFCE Africa -Global Forum on Cyber Expertise ( REMOTE )</li> <li>○ Govt /Sector Regulator : National Cybersecurity Coordination Centre Representative</li> <li>○ Dr. Gilpin ROK Bank   Business Sector TBC **</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator: Dr. Victor Moinoni – Lecturer IPAM</b></p> <p><b>Rapporteur: MRU IGF Sec + ISOC SL Chapter Team</b></p>
1:50 am – 2:45 am	<b>HEALTH BREAK</b>





# Mano River Union Internet Governance Forum

MRU IGF 2024

Venue: New Brookfield Hotel Conference Hall -Freetown, Sierra Leone

From October 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> 2024 | Time: 9:30 am | Theme: "Bridging the Digital Divide for Inclusive Development."

## Day 1: MRU Internet Governance Forum -Plenary Session -October 9<sup>th</sup> , 2024

Morning Session	
9:00 am – 9:30 am	<b>Registration</b>
9:30 am – 10:00 am	Welcome Message and Opening Remarks by -ISOC Chapter Sierra Leone President & Sierra Leone Internet Governance Forum - by Ajaratu Marie Bomah
10:00 am – 10:10 am	Overview of MRU IGF & Statement from Secretariat of Mano River Union Internet Governance Forum -MRU IGF / Introduction -by Peterking Quaye , Initiator & Regional Coordinator -Mano River Union Internet Governance Forum
10:10 am- 10: 20 am	<b>Introduction of special Guest of Honor &amp; Keynote Speaker – by ISOC Rep</b>
10:20 am – 11:30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opening Speech &amp; Guest of Honor: Hon Salma M. Bah</li> <li>Minister of Communication, Innovation and Technology, Sierra Leone Niane</li> <li>"Digital Unity for MRU Prosperity" with Keynote Speeches</li> </ul>
11:30 am	Special Awards Presentation by Peterking Quaye -MRU IGF Secretariat & Ajaratu Bomah ( President ISOC Chapter SL )
11:45am – 12:00 pm	<b>Special Remark from Community /Stakeholders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internet Society Chapter -Sierra Leone - Vice President / Secretary ISOC Chapter Sierra Leone</li> <li>C Squared Liberia - Samuel Yeboah -Group CTO C Squared</li> <li>ICANN Rep – Yaovi Aiohoun -Director Stakeholder Engagement &amp; Operations for Africa – ICANN</li> <li>ISOC Chapter Guinea &amp; Guinea IGF Rep -Sankounba Kourouma President of the Guinean chapter of the Internet Society and the focal point of IGF Guinea</li> <li>Sierra Leone IGF - Ajaratu Marie Bomah, President / Focal Person</li> <li>Special Message from APRNIC ( Africa Network of Parliamentarian on Internet Governance )</li> <li>PTN Rep - Khadijah El-Laman   Senior Officer, Programmes   Paradigm Initiative ( REMOTE )</li> <li>Ministry of Post &amp; Telecommunication Republic of Liberia Rep .</li> <li>Liberia IGF Rep -Peterking Quaye, Liberia IGF Coordinator</li> <li>Special Message from MAG Chair – UN IGF, Madam Carol Roche ( VIDEO Message)</li> <li>Rep from Ministry of Digital Economy -Govt of Ivory Coast</li> </ul>

## Annex- Graphic of Representation & Participation

### Gender Distribution of Participants – MRU IGF 2024

Category	Male	Female	Total	Percentage (%)
Government Representatives	15	5	20	10%
Private Sector	30	15	45	22.5%
Civil Society & Academia	50	20	70	35%
Press & Media	10	2	12	6%
Technical Community	36	10	46	23%
Inter-Governmental	10	2	12	6%
Youth & Student Delegates	10	17	27	13.5%
Total	112	88	200	100%

#### Key Insights:

- Female participation accounted for 44%, while male participation was 56%.
- Youth & Student Delegates had a notable female majority, reflecting growing youth engagement in internet governance.
- Civil Society & NGOs recorded a nearly equal gender balance.
- Technical Community and Private Sector saw lower female participation, indicating areas for improvement in gender inclusivity.

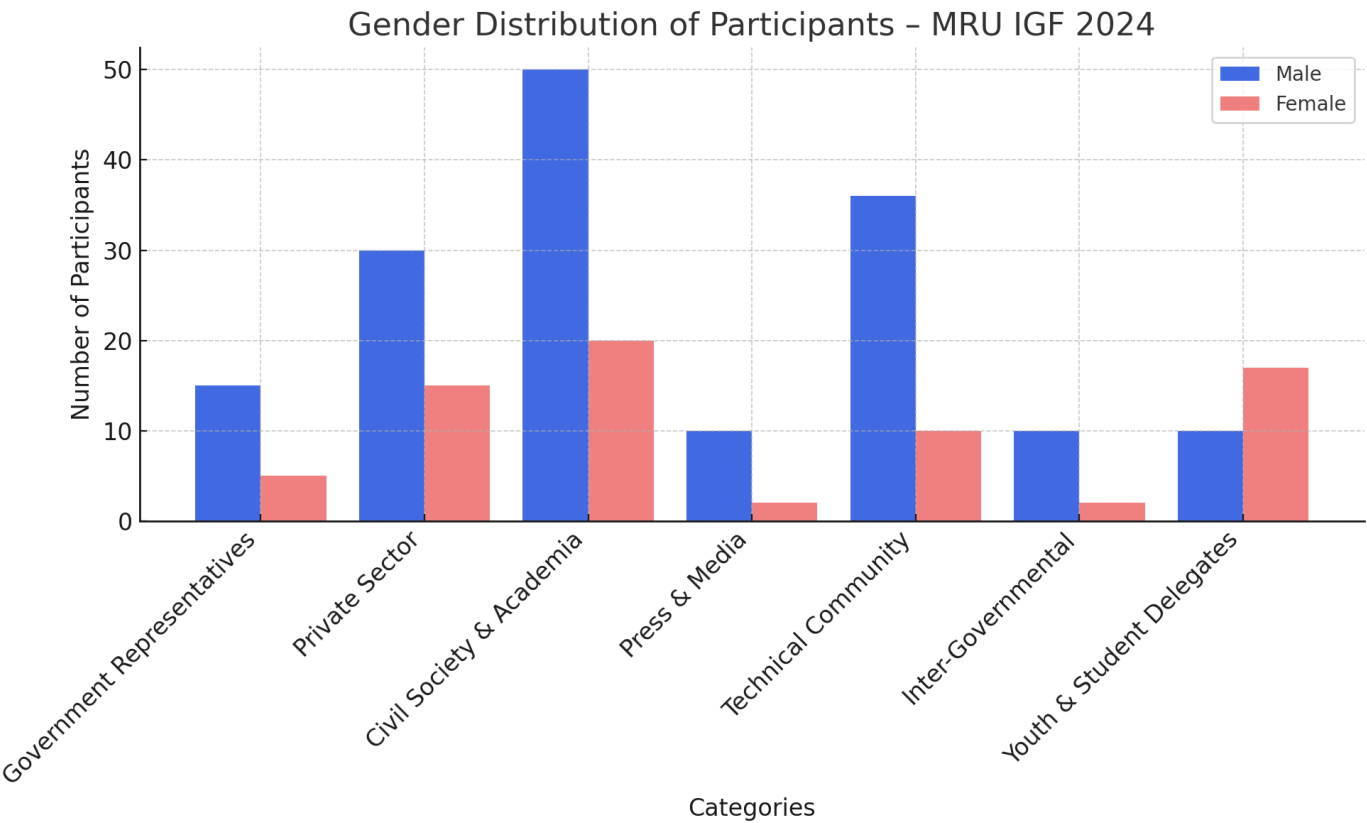


graphical representation of the Gender Distribution & Participation at the MRU IGF 2024:

Gender Distribution Chart – MRU IGF 2024

- Gender representation per sector
- Overall gender percentage distribution

A bar chart displaying gender distribution by sector at the MRU IGF 2024.



**Key Insights from Gender Representation in MRU IGF 2024:**

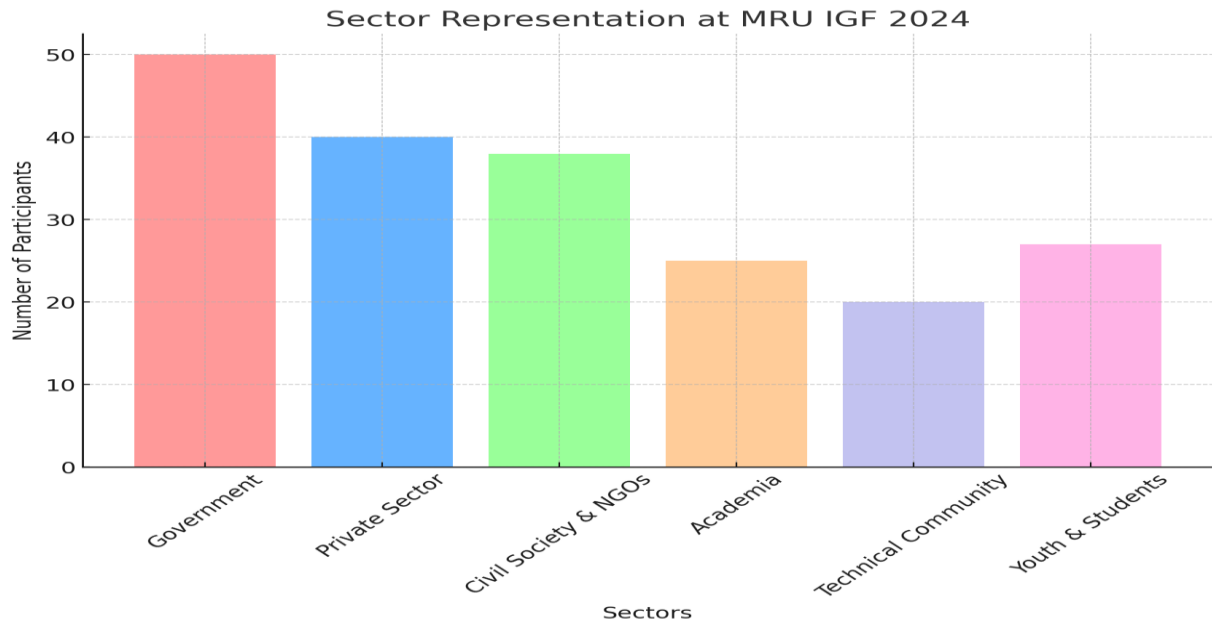
1. **Male-Dominated Participation:** The overall participation was 56% male and 44% female, indicating a gender gap.
2. **Civil Society & Academia Had the Highest Participation:** With 70 participants (50 male, 20 female), this sector had the highest overall representation.
3. **Youth & Student Delegates Showed Strong Female Presence:** Among youth and student delegates, female participation was notably high (17 female vs. 10 male).
4. **Technical Community and Private Sector Representation:** While these sectors had significant participation, male participants outnumbered females.
5. **Underrepresentation in Government and Inter-Governmental Sectors:** These sectors had the lowest female representation, highlighting a potential gap in women's participation in policy-making roles.

**Gender Distribution Table – MRU IGF 2024**

Category	Male Participants	Female Participants	Total
Government	15	5	20
Private Sector	25	15	40
Civil Society & Academia	20	18	38
Pres & Media	10	2	12
Technical Community	36	10	46
Intern-Governmental	10	2	12
Youth & Students	10	17	27
Total	112	88	200

- **Overall Male Representation: 56%**
- **Overall Female Representation: 44%**

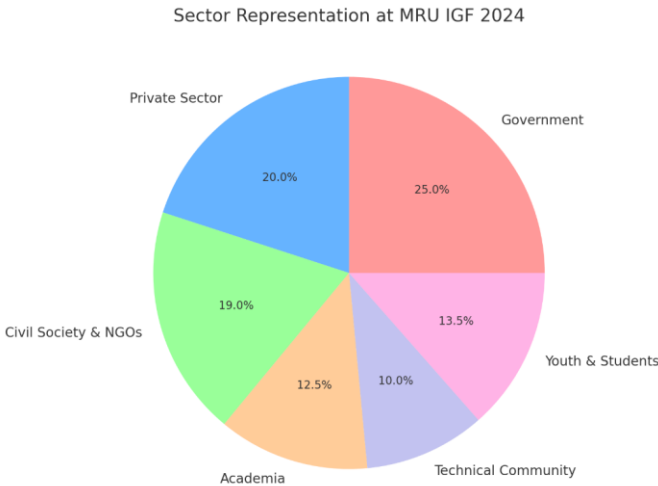
**Sector Representation at the MRU IGF 2024 based on participation numbers.**



**Key Insights**

- ◆ **Civil Society & Academia (19%)** had the highest representation, showing strong participation from research, policy, and advocacy groups.
- ◆ **Private Sector (20%)** played a crucial role, highlighting business and industry engagement in internet governance.
- ◆ **Government Representatives (25%)** actively participated, emphasizing the commitment of policymakers to digital transformation.
- ◆ **Technical Community (10%)** ensured that discussions remained technically grounded, while **Youth & Student Delegates (13.5%)** showcased growing youth involvement in digital policy.
- ◆ **Press & Media (12.5%)** presence helped amplify key discussions on digital rights, cybersecurity, and regional ICT policies.
- ◆ **Inter-Governmental Participation (6%)** reflected the role of international agencies in shaping regional ICT policy.

**Sector representation at MRU IGF 2024.**



## **Contact Us**

**For more information about the MRU IGF and opportunities for partnership, please contact us:**

**MRU IGF Secretariat**

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