Contact: press@webfoundation.org

Hundreds of Leaders Gather in Accra for Inaugural Africa Summit on Women and Girls in Technology

- *African policymakers and technology leaders - including some of the continent's most prominent women - will meet to determine the policy steps needed to close Africa's growing digital gender gap, which is the <u>largest in the world</u>[1]*
- *High-level panels and lightning talks will focus on issues around affordable broadband, digital skills and entrepreneurship, and women's rights online*

13 September 2016. Over 200 of Africa's leading technology innovators are scheduled to gather September 13-14 in Accra, Ghana for the inaugural <u>Africa Summit on Women and Girls in Technology</u>. The new <u>UN Sustainable Development Goals</u> commit countries to achieve universal and gender-equitable Internet access, and to enhance the use of ICTs to empower women, yet research has shown that women in some communities are <u>up to 50% less likely than men to be online</u>[2]. In Africa, where nearly 80% of the population remains offline, this problem is particularly acute. As African and other leaders come under pressure to show progress on these ambitious commitments, Summit participants will explore how technology policies can work to close the digital gender divide and empower African women and girls through technology.

The two-day event will feature lightning talks from young African female technologists, as well as high-level discussions with many of Africa's most prominent ICT policymakers and technology leaders today, including: Dr Omobola Johnson, former Nigerian Minister of Communication Technology; Funke Opeke, CEO of MainOne; Angelique Weeks, Chairperson of the Liberia Telecommunications Authority; Anne Githuku Shongwe, Founder and CEO of Afroes Interactive Learning; and Nnenna Nwakanma of the World Wide Web Foundation. Sessions will highlight the need for gender-responsive ICT policy in Africa, and will aim to design the solutions needed to enable millions of African women and girls to benefit from greater access to technology, and to use their skills to build a better Africa for all.

The 2016 Summit — a collaboration between the <u>Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI)</u>, the <u>World Wide Web Foundation</u>, the <u>Ghana-India Kofi Annan Center of Excellence in ICT (AITI-KACE)</u>, the <u>African Development Bank</u>, and <u>UN Women</u> — will also feature the launch of a new framework from the Web Foundation to audit the digital gender gap, along with 10 country-specific assessments that analyse the policy efforts and progress made across these countries toward reducing barriers to women's online access and use.
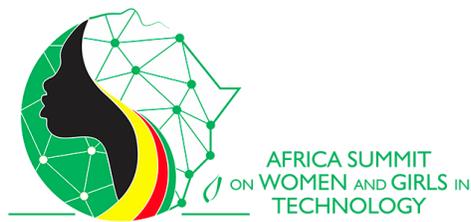
All places at the event have been filled, but those unable to attend in person may follow online through the hashtag <u>#TechWomenAfrica</u>.

--END PRESS RELEASE--

---

[1] Africa's digital gender gap is 23%. (ITU Facts & Figures 2016, http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/ICTFactsFigures2016.pdf)
[2] Web Foundation, Women's Rights Online (2015), http://webfoundation.org/about/research/womens-rights-online-2015/

Notes to editors:

1. The 2016 Africa Summit on Women and Girls in Technology will take place Tuesday, 13 September and Wednesday, 14 September at the Labadi Beach Hotel in Accra, Ghana. Media interested in attending and/or covering the event should contact Lauran Potter, Alliance for Affordable Internet Communications Manager, at lauran.potter@webfoundation.org. With apologies, no financial support to attend the event is available.

2. Interviews with Summit speakers and organisers are available upon request.

3. The 2016 Africa Summit on Women and Girls in Technology is a collaboration between the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI), the World Wide Web Foundation, the Ghana-India Kofi Annan Center of Excellence in ICT (AITI-KACE), the African Development Bank, and UN Women.

4. **About the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI):** The Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) is the world's broadest technology sector coalition. Initiated by the World Wide Web Foundation in 2013, the Alliance today comprises over 80 member organisations from across the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors. These diverse actors have come together to advance the shared aim of affordable, universal access to both mobile and fixed-line Internet in developing countries, primarily through policy and regulatory change. A4AI's global sponsors include Google, USAID and SIDA. For more, please visit: a4ai.org

   About the World Wide Web Foundation: Established by the inventor of the Web, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, the World Wide Web Foundation seeks to establish the open Web as a global public good and a basic right, creating a world where everyone, everywhere can use the Web to communicate, collaborate and innovate freely. Represented by more than a dozen nationalities working from hubs in London, Washington DC and Cape Town, the World Wide Web Foundation operates at the confluence of technology and human rights, targeting three key areas: Access, Voice and Participation. For more, visit: webfoundation.org

   About AITI-KACE: The Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT (AITI-KACE), Ghana's first Advanced Information Technology Institute works to stimulate the growth of the ICT Sector in ECOWAS. Established in 2003, through a partnership between the Government of Ghana and the Government of India, this state-of-the-art facility provides a dynamic environment for innovation, teaching and learning as well as practical research on the application of ICT4D in Africa.

   About the African Development Bank: The African Development Bank Group (AfDB) is a multilateral development finance institution established to contribute to the economic development and social progress of African countries. The overarching objective of the AfDB is to spur sustainable economic development and social progress in its regional member countries (RMCs), thus contributing to poverty reduction, and works to do this by mobilising and allocating resources for investment, and by providing policy advice and technical assistance to support development efforts.

   About UN Women: UN Women is the organization within the United Nations System responsible for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. It works in over 80 countries and with governments, UN partners, civil society and private sector partners to advance women's rights through advocacy, policy and concrete actions on the ground. UN Women focuses on women's economic empowerment, ending violence against women and women's political participation and leadership. ICT for development is a cross-cutting area of work and critical to women's empowerment in the digital age. UN Women is committed to ensuring that women are actively leading, contributing to and benefitting from the digital revolution. For more information, visit http://www.unwomen.org