



# Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2019

Date: Friday, March 15, 2019  
Venue: Nkrumah Hall, Marriott Accra, Ghana  
Time Started: 14:57 GMT  
Time Ended: 16:34 GMT

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## Welcome & Call to Order

The AGM was opened by Prof. Nii Narku Quaynor [Board Chair, WACREN]. He welcomed members to the AGM. He walked members through the agenda for the day.

## Attendees

The Board:

- Prof. Nii Narku Quaynor (NNQ) – Chair
- Dr. Boubakar Barry (BB) – CEO, WACREN
- Prof. Michael Faborode (MF)
- Dr. Ousmane Moussa Tessa (OMT) – Niger REN'
- Dr. Eyouleki Venant Palanga (VP) - TogoRER
- Mr. Anicet Claude Andjouat (AA)

## Agenda

1. Roll call
2. Review and adoption of agenda
3. Review and adoption of report of last AGM
4. Matters arising from 2018 AGM
5. CEO report
6. Governance reform
7. Discussion
8. AOB (Open Mic)



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## 1. ROLL CALL

WACREN members in attendance:

1. RER Benin
2. FasoREN
3. RETER Cote D'Ivoire
4. GARNET
5. GhREN
6. MaliREN
7. NigerREN
8. NgREN
9. SLREN
10. TOGORER
11. RENATER
12. Eko-Connect

Absent:

13. Cameroon RIC – absent
14. ChadREN – absent

Total participation - 55

## 2. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A motion to adopt the agenda of the meeting was moved by GARNET CEO, and seconded by TOGO RER CEO.

## 3. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF REPORT/MINUTES FOR LAST AGM

MaliREN moved for adoption of minutes; Togo RER seconded.

## 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM 2018 AGM

- *Membership Drive*

CEO announced that no new member joined WACREN in 2018, despite frantic efforts to get on-board Liberia, Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau.



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- *Staffing*

The position of Executive Assistant was filled in 2018; two new staff would joined on April 1, 2019.

- *Income Generation*

GARNET and NgREN connected to WACREN backbone. Billing to start soon.

MaliREN asked about the nature of services offered to connected members.

CEO responded that tests are being run on the two NRENs. Main services are connectivity to the global REN and the internet. Pilot on Zoom Video Conference.

WACREN CSO explain that identity services for GARNET and NgREN as well as deploying WACREN zoom on trial.

Hosted repository services would also be rolled out within the next quarter.

- *Payment of Annual Membership Fees*

CEO mentioned that about half of members still not paid annual fees.

GARNET asked about measures taken to engage non-paid NRENs.

CEO responded that for some good reasons – no Finance and Admin Officer in place and frantic preparations towards WACREN 2019 Conference, work was not done on invoices. Invoices and reminders on arrears were sent to owing NRENs in the previous years.

## 5. CEO REPORT

- *WACREN Backbone and Membership*

- Most activities centered on deploying the WACREN backbone and running procurement process. No new member joined

- *Advocacy*

- Lobbying policy makers and other interest parties at international meetings to court support for NRENs. Example IAF Conference and DICAMES anniversary.
- Benin demonstrated commitment to pay its counterpart-funding quota, after meeting with the Ministers of Higher Education and Telecommunications, respectively.

- *Capacity Building*

- Women in WACREN workshop – Lagos (January, 2018)
- BGP and Peering workshop – Lomé (March, 2018)
- CSIRT workshop – Lagos (November, 2018)
- LIBSENSE 1 workshop – Zanzibar (November, 2018)



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- *Projects – AfricaConnect2 (1)*
  - Raising of WACREN contribution
    - One country joined AC2, bringing total contributing members to seven (7) – MaliREN, FasoREN, TogoRER, NgREN, RITER, GARNET and Benin.
    - Contributions transferred to GÉANT
  - 350,000 counterpart-funding needed by WACREN to access the 80% funding from the European Commission (EC)
- *Projects – AfricaConnect2 (2)*
  - Project extended from November 29, 2019 to May 15, 2019 to access contributions from members
  - Implementation
    - Links for Accra-Lagos (10G) and Lagos-London (10G) live;
    - Peering with GEANT and Internet2 done;
    - Link Lomé-Accra (10G) procured; contract to be signed soon
    - Link Abidjan-lagos (1G) procured; contract to be signed soon
    - Link Bamako-Abidjan (1G) procured; contract to be signed soon
    - Link Ouagadougou-Abidjan (1G) procured; contract to be signed soon
    - Paper for procurement towards connecting Benin completed
  - GARNET and NgREN are all connected. WACREN would soon bill the two to generate income.
  - The CTO expatiated on the link diagram showing the active and operational connections as well as the yet-to-be-deployed connections on the backbone. Togo connection close to completion. Service would start in mid-April. Mali and Faso to be connected to Abidjan.
- *Projects – AfricaConnect2 (4)*
  - Next phase of the project (AC3) was approved by the EC in November, 2018. A four (4) year project.
  - Action document with objectives has been provided by the EC. Main document that would spell out various work packages are being worked on.
  - Total budget of the project (for the 3 clusters) will be 37.5m Euros, with 30m Euros to be provided by the EC
  - Same funding scheme as for AC2 (80:20)
  - Next meeting on AC3 will be held on March 21, 2019 in Amsterdam (EC, GÉANT, ASREN, and UA )
- *Staffing*
  - Former CTO has now moved to new created position – Chief Strategy Officer (CSO)
  - Former SNE now new CTO
  - One staff – Executive Assistant – Tigui Bah (Mrs) joined in 2018
  - Two (2) new staff would join soon: Network and Systems Engineer – Eric Attou (Mr.) and Communication and Marketing Officer – Kwaku Effah Amponsah (Mr)



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- Finance and Administration Officer (FAO) position still vacant, because the successful candidate turned down the offer. Head hunting ongoing.
- *Office Space*
  - Vice Chancellors Ghana (VCG) has offered WACREN an office space as well as a space for the Network Operation Centre (NOC) at its (VCG's) office complex.
  - New staff would work from the new office soon.
  - Tenancy agreement signed for three (3) years renewable.
- *Finances*
  - There are challenges in collecting membership fees. Only a few members are in good standing
  - AC2 catering for close to 100% of the expenditures for running the WACREN Secretariat and organising activities.
  - By the next AGM, situation may change as WACREN starts charging for services rendered to members.

NgREN moved for acceptance of report; MaliREN seconded.

## **Comments/Questions and responses on CEO Report**

### *Financial reports and external auditors*

WACREN has external auditors. Draft financial report received already. Hoping to get FAO to do financial statement for 2018 and send. Hired a financial consultant who sent it recently to be sent to external auditors. 2017 Audited Financial Statement would be shared, while awaiting the Board to adopt that of 2018, before dissemination.

### *Connection bottleneck for NgREN*

WACREN is exploring ways to facilitate peer interconnection within neighbouring countries at affordable prices. Exploring the option of strategic partnerships with telecom providers to help in this regard. After WACREN 2019 Conference, there would be a meeting with members and telcos to collaborate on how to scale the challenge. If the 'Nigeria model' is successful, it would be replicated in other jurisdictions. The bane affects not only NgREN but WACREN as a whole in terms of provision of service to NgREN.

### *GARNET Website*

Website is redone but yet to go live on the web space.



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## 6. GOVERNANCE REFORM

- Recognising the critical period in which WACREN is: transition from AC2 to AC3 as well as ongoing network rollout, change of leadership of WACREN may constitute a risk.
- There is the need to expand the Board to be more inclusive – involve more stakeholders e.g. end-users, lecturers, researchers, policy makers, representatives of regional organisations, decision makers etc.
- Process adopted by Board for consideration for members.

### **Resolution 20190215-01**

Board commended WACREN CEO and team for commencing the deployment of the WACREN network.

Resolution was ratified by AGM.

### **Resolution 20190215-02**

The Board resolved:

- i) to carry out a process of governance reform to expand the Board and diversify its composition by including more stakeholder groups;
- ii) to set up a Governance Reform Committee to be composed by two (2) current members of the Board, the CEO as Secretary and then two other members to be nominated by the WACREN members for selection by the Board;
- iii) to replace the two members of the Board through a nomination process and selection process;
- iv) to complete the two processes described above within three (3) months;
- v) to give the Governance Reform Committee six (6) months for submission of a draft report to the Board to share with members for input;
- vi) to adopt new governance structure at the 2020 WACREN AGM;
- vii) to run the nomination and selection process of Board members for inauguration of the new Board at the 2021 AGM.

GARNET moved motion for adoption of resolution on Board composition and governance reforms; TogoRER seconded.

Resolutions were passed by AGM.

## 7. DISCUSSIONS

GARNET asked about the constitutionality of the reform process. A member said diversification means transparency and inclusiveness

A member requested Board to consider gender inclusion in the new reform process.

RENATER requested to abstain from voting on the reform process

CEO responded that the constitution gives room for reforms and that the Governance Review Committee would also have the task of considering revision of the constitution and gender inclusiveness.



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## 8. Any other Businesses (AoB)

### *Connectivity to MaliREN*

MaliREN asked about timeframe Mali would be connected to WACREN backbone

WACREN unable to give timeline. Mali cannot be connected until a link from Cote D'ivoire to Lagos is done because Mali is on that connection. GÉANT would now proposing a contract to the winning bidder. Soon Mali would be connected.

### *Connectivity to Francophone universities*

UEMOA requested WACREN to engage government to help find a solution to the connectivity in francophone universities.

WACREN requested support from ECOWAS, UEMOA to lobby governments to facilitate affordable connectivity to institutions of higher learning in francophone Africa.

### *Hosting of WACREN Conferences in the future*

GARNET requested Board to inform AGM about plans for hosting of future conference.

WACREN would make an open call for members to bid to host Conference 2021.

### *Diversity and Inclusiveness of WACREN*

KNUST Librarian requested WACREN to be more diverse and inclusive to capture all stakeholders and interested parties.

CEO said WACREN is forward to do that, hence, the given tasks of the Governance Reform Committee. Workshops for librarians – LIBSENSE 1 & 2 testifies that WACREN acknowledges the importance of librarians to the community.

## 9. Adjournment

The Chair highlighted the growing need to engage governments, policy makers, regional organisations to dialogue with infrastructure providers to release infrastructure and modify pricing. He added that the community has evolved and chalked successes over the years and called for more to be done. He called for more collaboration, consensus building and inclusiveness in order to win as a community.

GhREN moved for adjournment of the AGM; NgREN seconded.

The Chair thanked members and closed the AGM.