Recommendation of Kigali workshop regarding the African Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-AFRICA)

Kigali, 30th of Mai 2010,

CERT- AFRICA : The African response to capacity development on cybersecurity

The fight against cybercrime and cyber threats requires a strong partnership between all the stakeholders in the cyberspace. Cyber Security being probably the most complex threat against modern societies, there does not seem to be any obvious path to meet that challenge. But, with the pioneering efforts of a few, developing countries are discovering a way to Cyber Security capability. While every country can be a special case, there is a fundamental similarity of situations and developing countries are learning to help each other in that effort in addition to receiving some help from more advanced countries.

In Africa, few countries have started their security project and fulfilled some good steps; other countries have now started implementing national mechanisms for combating cybercrime and other related threats; however, a sizeable number of African countries still do not have a strategic plan and are unable to start their first actions. These countries need to be assisted and supported, through guidance and advisory services as well as experience and information sharing with others. Knowledge and information sharing is indeed the missing link at the moment.

It is against that backdrop that the CERT-AFRICA initiative is being proposed as a means for providing a continental platform for African countries to enhance regional and international cooperation on information security; through the platform, countries will assist each other to establish national Computer Security Instant response Teams (CSIRT) and thereby improve their incident handling capabilities; also, the platform will provide technical support and look for financial resources.

Participants at the Kigali workshop have agreed there was a need to establish a regional CERT and to find a way to share knowledge and experience between African courtiers; they also agreed to continue with the initiative of creation of an African CERT, which was already started by Tunisia and South African by doing good steps to formalize this initiative and to get support from all interested parties. Participants agreed to join efforts by focusing on the development of synergies among the African information security community.

Thus, participants have decided to create a working group, to look for ways to join efforts among African stakeholders, and to brainstorm about future steps to concretize the CERT-AFRICA project ideas and objectives relying on African communities' efforts.

The working group will look at:

- The CERT-AFRICA objectives and how to fulfill them;
- Ways to get African countries and stakeholders involved;
- Identify the common challenges of African countries in setting-up their CSIRT.
- Enrich the database of point of contacts:
    - ISPs and telecom operators,
    - Government,
    - Information security institution (Private and Public),
    - Information security experts as individuals.

The working group will adopt the cert-africa.org website as an information sharing platform and a communication tool for all members.

The CERT-AFRICA project aims inter alia, to enhance experience and information sharing; to boost collaboration to address security threats and to handle major incident; to promote research and development activities in cyber security in Africa; and develop technical and legal tools to fight cybercrimes.

CERT-AFRICA is ultimately the resource outlet that will help security experts to share and enhance collaboration to address security threat by connecting leading African security experts and bringing them around a common project. While CERT-AFRICA will be inward looking for its activities, it will also be a conduit for connecting African countries to ongoing efforts within international instances such as the FIRST, the ITU, ICANN, UNCTAD, OIC, etc.

The cyber security workshop recommendations will be very valuable for all the Internet community in Africa, and will enhance cooperation among African institutions.

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