

*By Francis Byaruhanga;*

Russian cybersecurity mega company has announced the opening of its first Transparency center for the African region with a base in Kigali, Rwanda.

The opening of new center is part of the Kaspersky's Global Transparency initiative with an aim to establish company's reliability and solutions as well as advocating for greater transparency throughout the cyber security industry. The new center will offer comprehensive overview of the Kaspersky's engineering and data processing practices, and a live demonstration of the source code for its products and services.

As indicated in the press release, the center is designed to serve the "blue piste" review option which has gained significant popularity among Transparency Center's visitors since the opening of the first facility in 2018. It offers a general overview of Kaspersky's engineering and data processing practices.

Additionally, as part of the "blue piste" partners and customers can improve or acquire skills to assess the security of ICT products that their organizations use, learning the highlights of Kaspersky's Cyber Capacity Building Program for government organizations, academia and companies.

According to the World Bank report broadband internet access in Africa grew from 26% in 2019 to 36% in 2012.

The African Union Digital Transformation Strategy recommends that people in Africa should be digitally empowered by 2030 implying that digitalization will enhance both opportunities and challenges.

Underscoring the strong nexus between transparency and the fight against cybercrime, and Kaspersky's commitment to both causes, the new Transparency Center opening was welcomed by the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL).

"The African region is currently undergoing rapid digital transformation, with Internet penetration continually growing year on year. To counter potential security risks stemming from the use of technology, it is imperative to understand what forms an effective framework to mitigate risks," AFRIPOL's Acting Executive Director, Ambassador Jalel Chelba, commented.

Chelba also commended the initiative of opening a new branch lauding that the new

center will build a digital trust in the region.

“We appreciate the company’s openness and welcome its Global Transparency Initiative, which is exemplary for organisations in the region in terms of building digital trust. Kaspersky has a proven track record of collaborating with local, regional and international law enforcement agencies to combat cybercrime, sharing its technical expertise, in the spirit of transparency,” he further noted.

A growing emphasis on cybersecurity within the pan-regional African agenda is piquing the interest of national authorities.

With the opening of the facility in the region, Kaspersky will expand its network to encompass a total of 11 Transparency Centers located across Europe, Asia-Pacific, North and Latin America, the Middle East and Africa.

During her keynote speech at the ACDF, Genie Sugene Gan, Head of Government Affairs and Public Policy for Asia-Pacific, Japan, Middle East, Turkey and Africa regions at Kaspersky said the growing emphasis on cyber security within the pan-regional African agenda is piquing the interest of national authorities.

“By opening the Transparency Center, Kaspersky aims to address the local market needs, offering education in such critical areas as evaluating product security and establishing secure development processes,” he added.

However, the significant gap in cyber-capacity building remains.