



**PRESENTATION ON ICTS FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIAL
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT @ THE 17TH
SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

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INTRODUCTION

- The UN CSTD and other UN agencies (eg UNESCO, UNCTAD, ITU) deserve credit for their works in creating awareness among nations ...
- And it is the creation and adoption of ICTs led by the private sector which is contributing to the kind of social and economic change and growth which we must have ...

THE TRANSFORMATION – FROM DIGITAL DIVIDE TO DIGITAL SPREAD

- During the WSIS, the gap in the utilization and application of ICTs was recognised as the Digital Divide between the developed countries and the developing countries. While this divide was true prior to 2005, it is no longer the reality today.
- The articulation of the WSIS Action lines and targets in 2005, assertive programme of the UN coordinating agencies coupled with the complimentary activities of the regional economic commission (eg UNECA) have certainly contributed to this shift in attitude.

THE TRANSFORMATION – FROM DIGITAL DIVIDE TO DIGITAL SPREAD

- Coupled with the advent of innovative technologies (eg mobile technologies), establishment of community tele-centres in schools and villages, divestment of monopolies into private hands and general creation of enabling environment by regulators, and ICT development agencies and the entrepreneurship of business; what before was known as a divide (representing a gulf or separation) has significantly shifted.
- We are seeing a **Digital Spread**, and our challenge today is how to aggressively accelerate and balance this Digital Spread.

THE TRANSFORMATION – FROM DIGITAL DIVIDE TO DIGITAL SPREAD

- The Spread reflects a state of flux which can be evened or balanced when nations adopt and adapt well known developmental methodologies, measures and policy frameworks. The examples of South Korea and Singapore once developing nations but now developed nations readily come to mind.
- Where the Spread remains unbalanced, it could be attributed to a state of **Digital Peace of Mind (DPM)** where inclusive innovation (eg mobile money in Kenya) does not elicit wide adoption in other climes. It is important to note that technological knowhow and best practices to enable nations to create the ability for their businesses and their citizens to by-pass legacy systems and practices are now readily available for needed socio-economic transformation.

ICT ENABLES, EMPOWERS AND ENRICHES

- The impact of ICT in the new status of Nigeria as the biggest economy in Africa cannot be over-emphasized, with an economy transformed from US\$260b to \$510b after a 2013 rebasing of GDP which was last done in 1990 when ICT was not a variable. Though telecommunication is estimated to add 8.69% to the Nigerian GDP, the overall contribution of ICT considering that it enables other sectors may be close to 27%. The underlining reason for the transformation in Nigeria is the 2001 government policy to liberalise the telecom industry which remains sustained till today.

EMERGING TRENDS IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Datafication
- Big data
- Open data
- Cloud computing
- Internet of Things (IoT)

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO OPTIMISE THE BENEFITS OF ADVANCES IN ICT FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

- Government is responsible for evolving appropriate policy frameworks to reap maximum benefits inherent in ICTs. In this regard, government should adopt the multi-stakeholder approach to policy review, formulation and implementation. The multi-stakeholder approach is the involvement of key stakeholders in the private sector, technical and academic community; and the civil society in policy development. This would enable such policy frameworks developed to enjoy popular support at implementation.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO OPTIMISE THE BENEFITS OF ADVANCES IN ICT FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

- Government should focus on developing a robust broadband policy viz infrastructure development for data and power; last mile access and local content development particularly with regard to mobile communication. Nigerian and Rwandan governments are currently implementing open access networks.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO OPTIMISE THE BENEFITS OF ADVANCES IN ICT FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

- Government should use good practices methodology for policy implementation and for effective public fund management e.g. open and transparent use of the Universal Access Provision Funds and Development Funds.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO OPTIMISE THE BENEFITS OF ADVANCES IN ICT FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

- Government should enhance the capacity of ICT Centre of Excellence and higher institutions to produce capacity and capability necessary to meet the demand side of ICT4D.
- Institute a national periodic policy review mechanism among all stakeholders to measure progress and identify gaps

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO OPTIMISE THE BENEFITS OF ADVANCES IN ICT FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

- Governments should increase their participation in the IGF at the national, regional and the International level. Nigeria IGF comes up June 10 and Africa IGF July 9-10, global IGF September 5-9.
- Tackle ideological issues that prevent girls and women from effective participation in the inclusive socio-economic programme at national and global levels.

ISSUES THAT WOULD AFFECT TRENDS IN THE FUTURE

- Net Neutrality
- Intermediary liability
- Surveillance and data sovereignty
- Cybersecurity
- Cybercrime

CONCLUSION

- While there are gaps in ICT adoption and adaption, it is no longer as a result of helplessness or inability of a country to close the gaps; it is more of government willingness or otherwise to embrace appropriate policy framework to engender requisite change. Knowledge of good practice frameworks is readily available to create the right atmosphere for ICT to play its enabling role.

CONCLUSION

- Today, nine years after the World Summit, we can declare that there is digital spread influenced by the degree of adoption of policy frameworks or the contextual need factor (i.e. do we really need this technology?). It might also be a case of a **Digital Peace of Mind (DPM)** that is being satisfied with the technology that you have. A case in point is the wide adoption of mobile money in Kenya while many parts of the world showed less enthusiasm. Another case is the liberalization of the telecom sector in 2001 which today has transformed the socio-economic landscape of Nigeria. And many more African countries are following suit.

CONCLUSION

- Fast tracking ICTs and ICT4D for inclusive and sustained socio-economic development without any doubt depends on how quickly nations are able to take advantage of technologies most suited for their environment and culture. It also depends on focus to enact requisite legislative and policy frameworks to drive it while at the same time fostering high level national, regional and international co-operation among all stakeholders.