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## **Nigeria**

**NIGERIA'S INPUT TO THE SECOND PREPCOM MEETING OF THE WORLD  
SUBMIT ON INFORMATION SOCIETY TAKING PLACE IN GENEVA 17<sup>TH</sup> – 28<sup>TH</sup>  
FEBRUARY 2003.**

The world summit on information Society (**WSIS**) is a high level forum where various Governments in collaboration with the private sector and civil society will have the opportunity to define principles and strategies that may guide the transition towards the information society. The summit among other issues will address the broad range of questions concerning the Information Society and move towards a common vision and understanding of this societal transformation. The summit is expected to adopt a Declaration of Principle and Action Plan to facilitate the effective growth of the information society and to help bridge the digital divide. It will also offer a unique opportunity for the world community to discuss and give shape to the information society.

The following input from the Nigerian Government is aimed at highlighting the important aspects that could be useful in the preparation of a working document for the 2<sup>nd</sup> PrepComm meeting scheduled to take place in Geneva between 17<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2003.

**(I). FRAME WORK FOR PLAN OF ACTION**

The plan of action should be adoptable to individual country's needs and values. Emphasis should be placed on the role of the public sector in the formulation and implementation of ICT related policies in partnership with International Organization, the private sector and the civil society.

The plan/theme should focus on: -

## **Infrastructure**

Telecommunication infrastructure is recognized as the central/essential backbone and perhaps the most critical for bringing about an IT revolution in any society. It forms the bedrock to national ICT policy that requires the involvement of regulatory body and the private sector. The main objectives are:

- Reliable and affordable access to information and the development of service relevant to the economy depends on infrastructure.
- Upgrading the existing telecommunication infrastructure is equally important in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the summit's declaration.
- Extension of the telecommunications services to rural remote areas in the developing countries.
- Infrastructural developments mostly rely on telecommunications regulatory agencies and private sector support.
- Provision of public Internet access points such as:  
Cyber café, community center and telecenters have proven to be very successful in the developing countries.
- Injecting more fund into the Regional satellite organization e.g.  
**RASCOM** for its full take off.

## **Action**

- There is a need to recognize and focus attention on building infrastructure and supportive environment to facilitate access at affordable rates in order to create the framework for an information society.
- Regional communities must take up the challenge of raising the teledensity to a reasonable level within a set time frame. Such approach will give meaning to the goals of the declaration.

- Telecommunication equipment manufacturers/ vendors should take into cognizance the peculiar circumstances in the developing countries. Some of the equipments should be manufactured in these countries.
- The cost of bandwidth should be drastically reduced to an affordable price for the developing countries to get connected for easy access.
- Unused capacity on satellite transmission links should be offered to the developing countries at preferential rates. This will offer rapid access to the international network. There should be interoperability of satellite systems using common standards.
- The telecommunication industry, particularly the satellite operators should be encouraged to participate in the development of a global broadband satellite infrastructure.
- There should be more spot beam facilities in the developing countries in order to reduce cost of satellite terminal equipments.
- Telecommunication technologies that are complementary to the Internet must be harnessed together.
- International bodies such as **UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, USAID, UNIDO**, etc should collaborate in facilitating access to **ICT** and Internet facilities.

## **(II) SETTING UP AN ENABLING LEGAL, REGULATORY AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT**

A well articulated regulatory policy should ensure increased market entry for private sector participation and the promotion of competition in the industry. The strategy is to reduce or eliminate barriers to entry to existing markets and identify/create new opportunities for investment. Within this framework, international cooperation and support should be given to regulatory agencies in the developing nations to aid them effectively to liberalize the industry and encourage competition.

To maximize the economic and social benefit of the information society, developing countries should be encouraged to create a clear policy with an enabling environment suitable to their needs.

### **Action**

- Review of existing telecoms legislation to facilitate the creation of a regulatory environment that is sufficiently flexible to take into account new technological developments and the international trend towards convergence.
- Regulatory policies should be tailored towards creating dynamic competitive markets, maximizing access to a diverse range of communications services.
- Design and implementation of policy for development, based upon the utilization of **ICTs** should be guided by principles of equity and universality.
- Policy should be conceived and implemented with the participation of civil society taking into account public interest.
- Governments should ensure that legislation is developed towards ensuring consumer protection and the delivery of quality services at affordable costs.
- Emphasis should be placed on policies that promote competition, transparency, non-discrimination and neutrality. There should be no discriminatory advertisements.
- Promoting efficient utilization of operating resources e.g. frequency spectrum, development of a national numbering plan and a national frequency plan
- Developing policies that will promote the development of advanced technologies e.g. Internet Exchange Points (IXPs), development of IP gateways, development of regional satellite systems etc.

- There is need for the availability of credit card facility to make e-commerce meaningful in LDCs.
- Continued exchange of regulatory skills and personnel between regulators in developed and developing nations, in order to boost capacity development and knowledge exchange
- Developing policies that will encourage cross- border information exchange, including transfer of technology between countries, in order to bridge the digital divide
- **WSIS** should encourage research and development and adoption of technologies, to local needs and conditions. To this end, government should contribute to the development of technology-based firms by creating such mechanism as venture capital funds, technology incentives and business zone with the participation of academic institutions, research centers as well as the private sectors.

### (III) **PROMOTING UNIVERSAL ACCESS AT AFFORDABLE COST.**

An adequately developed infrastructure is the precondition for secure, reliable and affordable access to information by all stakeholders, and for the upgrading of relevant services. Improving connectivity is of special importance in this respect, and is to be undertaken by the public and the private sector acting in partnership. Community led development is a critical element in the strategy for achieving universal access to information and knowledge. Community access centers and public services (such as post offices, schools and Libraries) can provide effective means for promoting universal access particularly in remote areas, and thus contribute to the development of these areas. Furthermore, in order to ensure greater affordability, policy action should aim at setting up an appropriate open and competitive environment.

**Action:**

- \* In order to achieve universal access to information, public and private sector in partnership with communities should take up the initiations/challenges to improve on connectivity.
- \* Community centre and public services (such as post offices, schools, libraries, etc) can provide effective means of promoting universal access particularly in remote areas.
- \* Policies aimed at setting up appropriate and open competitive environment could ensure affordability to universal access.
- \* Removal of entry barriers by providing infrastructure such as road networks power etc.
- \* Creation of investment opportunities and incentives such as venture capital funds and loans for private investors in rural communications services.
- \* Active collaboration with international organizations and partners to promote private sector investment in ICTs.
- \* Development of policies on access to ICTs in rural communities.
- \* Establishment of a Universal Access Fund.

**(IV) PROMOTING LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY.**

New ICTs should stimulate cultural diversity and plurilinguism and enhance the capacity of governments to develop active policies to that end. Access and contribution to knowledge and information broaden the contents of the public domain and foster mutual understanding and respect for diversity.

### **Action**

- Foster partnership between developed and developing nation in the provision of ample local content to facilitate the deployment of ICT.
- Digitization of cultural materials and heritage to aid in the preservation of linguistic and cultural uniqueness of the developing nation.
- Assistance should be given to the developing world in the digitization and computerization of adequate information on monuments, history, culture and potential tourist sites so as to empower local communities of these nations.
- Assisting local communities of the developing world to develop/improve their Arts and Crafts so as to compete in the global market as a means to poverty eradication.
- Encourage the development of softwares in local dialect (language) for local communities to take advantage of the benefit of ICT.
- Development of language interfaces for access to web information in local languages.

### **(V) DEVELOPING HUMAN CAPACITY THROUGH EDUCATION AND TRAINING.**

It is important for governments to develop comprehensive and forward-looking education strategies. People should be enabled to acquire the necessary skills in order to participate actively in and understand the information society and fully benefit from the possibilities it offers.

These skills integrate ICT and are generally obtained through primary, secondary and higher education and on the job training but more and more, they are also obtained through distance learning. Technological change will progressively require life-long



learning and continuous training by all. Public policy should take into account inequalities particularly in the case of vulnerable groups and underserved or remote areas. Specific attention has to be paid to training of trainers. ICTs open completely new opportunities for e-learning. New forms of partnership between public and private sectors are needed in this field.

**(VI) E-LEARNING AND E-EDUCATION: EMPOWERING PEOPLE.**

E-learning is about development of skills to access knowledge, which address numerous issues such as local content, multilingual and cultural diversity and intellectual property rights. Access to knowledge is an essential tool in economic, cultural and social development. The potential exists for all those outside the reach of the formal education system to be offered education and information tailored to people to overcome poverty, therefore e-learning is one of the most important issues in the bridging of the digital divide.

**(VII) ADDRESSING GLOBAL ISSUES.**

International policy dialogue on the information society at global, regional and sub-regional levels should promote the exchange of experience, the identification and application of compatible norms and standards, the transfer of know-how and the provision of technical assistance with a view to bridging capacity gaps and setting up international cooperation programmes, particularly with regards to the creation of content. Sharing success stories and best practice experiences will also pave the way for new forms of international cooperation.

**(VIII) E-BUSINESS: MORE COMPETITIVENESS AND BETTER JOBS.**

Enterprises, both large and small, can use ICTs to foster innovation, realize gain in productivity and reduce transaction costs. In support of this process, governments need to stimulate, through the adoption of an enabling environment, services, regulatory framework for the promotion of private investment applications and content, based on a widely available broadband infrastructure, and foster public private partnerships.

Use of digital technologies can enhance the role of enterprises in promoting entrepreneurship, the accumulation of knowledge, the upgrading of skills and thereby increase productivity, incomes and jobs and improve the quality of working life. Special attention should be given to small and medium sized enterprises both as beneficiaries and promoters of e-business.

**(IX) E-SOCIETY: BORDER LOCAL CONTENT AND APPLICATIONS.**

In the information society, the involvement and participation of all, irrespective of gender or economic status, as well as the facilitation of ICT use in daily life and work, is a major objective.

Governments should promote actively the involvement of different stakeholders in the development of applications that improve overall quality of life, particularly in key areas such as education and health, both globally and at the local community level. Public policy should also foster the creation of varied information content, which helps to preserve and disseminate local and national culture, language and heritage. Local authorities have an important role to play, because for citizens, they represent the first level of contact with the administrations and they could

foster the development of local communities. Promotion of cultural diversity and identity, including the creation of varied information content and the digitization of the educational, scientific and cultural heritage is an important priority in the development of the information society. Research on the social and cultural impact of ICTs should be continued.