Multi-stakeholder Consultation within the Framework of Accelerating Digital Transformation through the ICT Centric Innovation Ecosystem

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Gaborone, Botswana

Gaborone Digital Transformation Agenda

DRAFT

Based on the discussion at the multi-stakeholder workshop on accelerating Digital Transformation towards the fourth industrial revolution held in Botswana for SADC countries – which gathered 20 participants from five countries, including implementation agencies Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA), Communications Regulators Association of Southern Africa (CRSA), Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) and Southern Africa Telecommunications Association (SATA) – a set of challenges and recommendations were identified, which may serve as a basis for planning and implementing future activities that foster digital transformation towards the fourth industrial revolution in SADC countries. All components of this set of challenges and recommendations which were developed by the community gathered at this meeting are all equally important and non-binding; so are the gaps that were discussed which ought to be addressed. These challenges and recommendations are intended for the purpose of consideration and to be used as input for the national review process to be carried out by ITU.

Following the outcome of the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017 (WTDC-17), Buenos Aires to foster digital transformation through ICT centric innovation, and the SADC ICTs Ministers’ meeting held (Kwa Zulu Natal, 2017) with the Preparing SADC for the Fourth Industrial Revolution through ICT, participants recognized the critical role of ICTs across all sectors of the economy and the particular contribution of vibrant ICT centric innovation ecosystem to accelerate digital transformation and socio-economic development. Stakeholders representing the various groups of the ecosystem articulated the following vision and goals that they see for SADC to accelerate digital transformation in the next 3-5 years, by elaborated key activities & components to foster along the ecosystem’s key pillars.

I. VISION (incl. Social, Political & Economic Goals)

To foster the Vision of the Ecosystem there is need to:

- Improve living standards for all SADC inhabitants through equitable distribution of resources
- Promote sustainable employment creation with an entrepreneurial focus that is geared towards regional integration
• Solve local socio-economic problems using innovative local solutions that reduce poverty and contribute to sustainable economic growth.

To address **Political** goals, there is need to:

• drive digital innovation system through ICT centric ecosystem within the prescripts of SADC 2027 that aligns with UN 2030 agenda and all strategies in order to achieve smart communities and solutions that are future focused and globally competitive
• Have regional political goals that are aligned to the vision and strategy for Digital Innovation
• Enhance democratic participation for all with open and transparent communication
• Have a governance structure that empowers people to define their socio-economic progress
• Adopt policies that grow the economy in a conducive environment for doing business and enhance employment & wealth creation
• Promote agile leadership

To address **Social** goals, there is need to:

• Create social inclusiveness, food security and good health
• Provide reliable and quality housing, water, roads and power supply
• Provide social benefit
• Inculcate entrepreneurship into everyday life
• Create social cohesive projects

To create **Economic** benefit there is need to:

• Create infrastructural development
• Provide stable political environments
• Provide labour laws that advance job creation
• Provide economic diversification
• Avail free movement of money within the economy
• Have enhanced per capita income.

II. **POLICY & REGULATION**

• Innovation, R&D & Competitiveness Policies
• National and Regional Innovation Strategies
• Policy & Regulatory Championship
• Collaborative Regulation for Multi sectoral Innovations
• Regulatory sand boxes in support of innovations
• Regional harmonization & Integration
• Procurement rules to support SMEs
• Regional Investment One-stop Shop Platform (Policy)
• Proactive procurement rules to foster domestic growth
• Framework for collaboration between Entrepreneurs, Academia, and Government
• Policies on intellectual property rights
• Policies on investment & Finances
• Crowdfunding laws
• Venture Capital laws
• Policy on talent promotion

III. CAPITAL & RESOURCES
• Provision of capital and resources should include mechanisms to access funding
• Increased spending on Research & Development initiatives to attract Foreign Direct Investment
• Members need to establish National Research Funds to foster knowledge generation through research
• At regional level, innovation & development fund and regional Venture Capital should be provided to encourage collaborative regional innovation initiatives

IV. TALENT & CHAMPIONS
• There is a need to create interconnected innovation hubs and platforms
• There is need for a deliberate coordinated entrepreneurial vocational training
• There should be a coordinated deliberate identification and development of relevant skills
• There is a need for innovative approaches to Digital skills curriculum
• Regional centralized Talent Pool is a necessity
• A need to match institutional learning to market requirements

V. INFRASTRUCTURE & PROGRAMS
• There is need for citizen-centric national & regional Infrastructure and programs that address local problems
• Foster need for intelligent infrastructure that entail Smart X frameworks such as Smart Cities, Smart Grid, Smart Homes, smart communities, etc.
• Need for accessible infrastructure in terms of coverage and accessibility;
• Well-aligned and harmonized broadband infrastructure that allows for free open access (including free flowing transit routes);
• Harmonized framework for management of scarce resources such as spectrum and numbering resources;
• Build start up technology centers in all localities at the national level;
• Need to build digital hubs at localities at national level and knowledge science parks in all provinces;
• Need to establish learning programs at grassroots in all localities at the national level.
• Need for a national and regional framework for distribution of soft infrastructure;
• Align for Digital e-Strategy for all Sectors (for example e-commerce, e-Agriculture, e-Education, e-Government, etc.).
VI. MARKET & NETWORKS

• Minimize cost and ease of doing business in the region particularly cross-border business.

• Give businesses exposure to regional markets through regionally coordinated trade exhibitions and networks.

• Encourage regional collaboration of businesses that are involved in production of similar or complimentary products/services to pool resources or coordinate efforts in order to penetrate world/global markets.

• Regional integration of markets is crucial for open access to markets of choice.

• Facilitate digital market that gives regional suppliers a virtual platform for information sharing, networking, selling and concluding other necessary transactions, especially for SMMEs and innovators.

VII. COMMUNITIES & CULTURE

• There is a need for risk management in entrepreneurship

• Promotion of cultural diversity among communities

• Develop awareness programs on success stories

• Embrace new technologies, e.g., artificial intelligence and 3D wearables and make awareness campaigns about their value

• Enhance research on cultural industries and invest in hub & incubation programmes

• Change the mindset about privacy issues