

Summary of debate

Well thought-out ICT policies have the potential to help our global community benefit from greater prosperity and stability. After 2 decades of private sector financing, the US government is now putting public money into ICT infrastructure building with some \$4 billion available to be invested in innovation, physical infrastructure, energy crisis management etc. Nevertheless, funding applications received by the US government totaled an amount of \$28 billion, underlining the vital need for additional investment. According to FCC estimates, from \$20 to \$350 billion would be needed in order to deliver broadband access to every citizen. One of the priorities of this public funding is to focus on un-served or under-served zones in urban areas. Since the demand is now to be aggregated from local governments, sustainable revenues could be generated by providing services to public institutions with a certain level of guarantee of use.

In Egypt, ICT is the industry that has been least affected by the economic downturn; it is still growing at a double digit rate. Particular effort has been placed on the development of human capital which makes Egypt an attractive partner for offshoring businesses. Foreign investments through offshoring and outsourcing activities are a key driver for the economic development of countries like Egypt – it indirectly helps co-invest in broadband and content generation. The development of ICT in Egypt is a political priority.

Meanwhile, Australia outlined visions for a national broadband coverage with 90% in 100Mbit/s fiber-to-home connectivity, which could cost \$43 billion. This would stimulate job creation, creating an average of 25'000 short term jobs over 8 years. Any transformation process would affect all sectors and release an undeniable potential for greater productivity. A planned \$100 million is to be invested in smart grid trials with \$250 to \$500 million earmarked for copper cable rollouts in Tasmania. The restructuring of the telecom industry is a challenge that lies ahead – although it will bring to an end a monopolistic landscape and help separate wholesalers from retail players. A cross-subsidy between rural and city areas would help avoid under-investment in marginal areas as higher prices will be imposed in the city in order to subsidize deployment in rural areas.