2020 Regional Development Forum for Africa (RDF-AFR)
Digital transformation to accelerate achievement of the SDGs
– Digital development, partnerships and funding

6-7 October 2020, 12:00 – 15:00 CAR (Virtual meeting)
with preparatory break-out sessions on 5 October 2020 (12:00 – 13:30 CAT time)

CONTRIBUTION BY Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority, Zambia

TITLE: Promotion of Emerging Technologies

EXPECTED DURATION OF PRESENTATION: [5 minutes]

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❖ **Africa Regional Initiatives:** [Select the Regional Initiative(s) relevant for your contribution]

[<mark>Yes</mark>/No] **AFR Regional initiative 1** – Building digital economies and fostering innovation in Africa

[<mark>Yes</mark>/No] **AFR Regional initiative 2** – Promotion of emerging broadband technologies

[Yes/No] **AFR Regional initiative 3** – Building trust and security in the use of telecommunications/ information and communication technology

[<mark>Yes</mark>/No] **AFR Regional initiative 4** – Strengthening human and institutional capacity building

[Yes/No] **AFR Regional initiative 5** – Management and monitoring of the radio-frequency spectrum and transition to digital broadcasting

❖ **Related ITU development thematic:** [Select the thematic area(s) relevant for your contribution]

[<mark>Yes</mark>/No] **Networks and digital infrastructure**

[Yes/No] **Cybersecurity**

[<mark>Yes</mark>/No] **Emergency telecommunications**

[Yes/No] **Environment**

[<mark>Yes</mark>/No] **Digital policy and regulation**

[Yes/No] **Capacity development**

[<mark>Yes</mark>/No] **Digital services and applications**

[<mark>Yes</mark>/No] **Digital inclusion**

[Yes/No] **Digital innovation ecosystems**

[Yes/No] **Statistics and data for evidence-based decision making**

❖ **Year(s) of implementation:** [Select the year(s) for which your action/project/initiative is relevant]

[Yes/No] **2018**	[Yes/No] **2019**	[Yes/No] **2020**	[Yes/No] **2021**	[Yes/No] **Others**

❖ **COVID-19 response related initiative:** [Please indicate if your action/project/initiative is relevant for COVID-19 response]

[Yes/No] **COVID-19 response related initiative**

We do not have a specific initiative for COVID 19 response but most of our initiatives that open up communication help people access information faster. Setting up of communication towers and supply of ICT equipment in under/unserved areas has allowed for more people to access this information related to COVID 19 as they are now able to receive news alerts via SMS and internet.

Background

In promoting universal access to ICTs for all by supporting the extension of services to unserved and under-served areas, Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) implements a number of projects under the Universal Access and Service Fund.

Below is a synopsis of various projects implemented by ZICTA to reduce the digital divide;

1. Connecting Learning Institutions Program

The Connecting Learning Institutions project was aimed at establishing computer labs in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions countrywide that met the basic conditions for "ICT readiness". The key objectives of this project were: to enhance quality of learning through enabling access to online educational resources to both teachers and pupils; to impart ICT skills and knowledge to teachers to enable them effectively and efficiently deliver lessons to pupils with the aid of ICTs.

What has been attained by this project

1. Provision of furniture, routers, uninterrupted power supplies (UPSs) 3,000 thin client computers, 300 desktop computers and 150 printer for administrative purposes and internet connectivity to 150 Primary and Secondary Schools and training of 300 teachers by British Council
2. Provision of furniture, router, 1,920 thin client computers, 96 computers and 48 printer for administrative purposes and internet connectivity to 48 tertiary institutions.
3. Provision of 3,420 user computer laboratories in 190 examination centers
4. Provision of 3, 200 user computers labs and 160 Printers to 160 primary and secondary schools and teacher training for the curriculum content for the 95 Primary schools;
5. A countrywide assessment of a further 558 schools from all the 10 provinces. These include 188 Secondary, 325 Primary, 36 Combined and 9 Community Schools.
6. Sensitization of the 558 schools on the need to put in place minimum standard requirements for the establishment of functional computer laboratories.

The total cost so far for the above interventions is estimated K90 million Kwacha (approximately USD 6 Million).

2. Project For Persons With Disabilities 2020

The project for Persons with Disabilities is an intervention that the Authority seeks to embark on to address the digital divide amongst people living with disabilities in Zambia. As an ICT regulator,

ZICTA seeks to provide opportunities to people with disabilities through the provision of customized computer labs to institutions working with this group of people.

What has been attained by this project

1. Supply, delivery and Installation of ICT Equipment for learners with disabilities to the following institutions:

    −   Supply of 1 Industrial Braille Printer, five (5) braille printers, five (5) overhead Projectors, 165 computers (those for visually impaired installed with JAWS) to various schools with learners with hearing and visual disabilities

    −   Training of teachers on the use of the ICT equipment for learners with visual impairment

2. In 2021 it is anticipated that a further 10 institutions will be supported with ICT equipment.

3. An estimated ZMW10 million (Approximately USD 666,667 at an exchange rate of 1USD-K15 has been spent to-date for this project.

3. Construction of Communication Towers

In 2014, the Fund embarked on construction of 204 communication towers offering 2G services in unserved and underserved areas to offer basic communications services for rural community. Between 2017 and 2019, the Fund further embarked on the construction of 25 additional towers offering 3G services. The total cost of the 25 additional towers that were completed in 2019 was USD 3.75 Million.

Below are the identified key challenges that the Authority faces in rolling out these ICT projects to ensure communication for all including the vulnerable groups;

a) Sustainability of the projects is a key challenge. The universal access still maintains the 204 communication towers. For the towers that were rolled out after wards, the Authority has partnered with the MNOs to take up the operational maintenance.

b) Lack of coordination with key developmental partners such as the road agency and power utility in infrastructure rollout. There is need for proper and accessible roads and power in some areas where the Authority rolls out.

c) Lack of private sector participation in reducing the digital divide other than the ICT licensees who contribute to the Universal Access Fund.

Proposal

ZICTA intends to expand on these projects as well as introduce more projects that help with promoting access to ICTS for all. This shall be done through:

•   Solicitation of more partnerships through PPPs in the provision of ICT equipment and services to unserved and underserved areas. The Authority will encourage private sector players to participate in ICT related projects to reduce the digital divide.

•   Request Government for more funding/tax incentives to the UAS Fund for more projects to reach more people and exploit synergies with key Government Ministries such as education, health and agriculture, to achieve Universal Access obligations.

•   Enhance the licence conditions to ensure ICT players adhere to the universal service obligations.

- Focus on provision of broadband in various forms to enhance content development and the development of digital skills.

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