

DIGITAL INCLUSION AND PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY ISSUES: AS MEASURES FOR PROMOTING OPEN KNOWLEDGE ENVIRONMENT (OKE) IN NIGERIA

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by

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AGENDA

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- ...
- Our gathering today is premised on one of the major outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis World Summit on Information Society in 2003 and 2005 respectively; which is the creation of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) as stated in the Tunis Agenda para 72 to 80.

- Paragraph 72:

We ask the UN Secretary-General, in an open and inclusive process, to convene, by the second quarter of 2006, a meeting of the new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue—called the ***Internet Governance Forum (IGF)***.



INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The mandate of the Forum is to:

- Discuss public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet.
- Facilitate discourse between bodies dealing with different cross-cutting international public policies regarding the Internet and discuss issues that do not fall within the scope of any existing body.



INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- Interface with appropriate intergovernmental organizations and other institutions on matters under their purview.
- Facilitate the exchange of information and best practices, and in this regard make full use of the expertise of the academic, scientific and technical communities.
- Advise all stakeholders in proposing ways and means to accelerate the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world.
- Strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet governance mechanisms, particularly those from developing countries.



INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- Identify emerging issues, bring them to the attention of the relevant bodies and the general public, and, where appropriate, make recommendations.
- Contribute to capacity building for Internet governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise.
- Promote and assess, on an ongoing basis, the embodiment of WSIS principles in Internet governance processes.
- Discuss, *inter alia*, issues relating to critical Internet resources.
- Help to find solutions to the issues arising from the use and misuse of the Internet, of particular concern to everyday users.
- Publish its proceedings.



INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Para 73: The Internet Governance Forum, in its working and function, will be multilateral, multi-stakeholder, democratic and transparent. To that end, the proposed IGF could:

- Build on the existing structures of Internet governance, with special emphasis on the complementarity between all stakeholders involved in this process – governments, business entities, civil society and intergovernmental organizations.
- Have a lightweight and decentralized structure that would be subject to periodic review.
- Meet periodically, as required. IGF meetings, in principle, may be held in parallel with major relevant UN conferences, *inter alia*, to use logistical support.



INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- Paragraph 80 further underscores its multi-stakeholder nature at the national and regional levels:

80. We encourage the development of multi-stakeholder processes at the national, regional and international levels to discuss and collaborate on the expansion and diffusion of the Internet as a means to support development efforts to achieve internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.



THE JOURNEY SINCE 2006

- Since 2006, IGF has grown in leaps and bounds. It held every year from Greece in 2006 to Brasil in 2007, India in 2008, Egypt in 2009, Lithuania in 2010 and Kenya in 2011. The Forum has enriched understanding of the policy issues around IG and the result has been deepening cooperation and collaboration within and among entities that are critical stakeholders on the IG discourse.



THE JOURNEY SINCE 2006

- The core and most appealing innovation of the IGF is its multi-stakeholder nature wherein the Government, the Business Community , the Civil Society, the Academia and the Technical communities on equal footing contribute to shaping the future of the Internet.



THE JOURNEY SINCE 2006

- The Forum's appeal has blossomed into the convening of continental, regional and national IGFs to provide a bottom-up feeder mechanism into the global IGF.



THE JOURNEY SINCE 2006

- In essence, we are gathered today to prepare Nigeria's position at the 1st Africa IGF scheduled for Cairo, October 2-4 and the global IGF scheduled for Baku, Azerbaijan on November 6-9, 2012. The West African IGF I understood took place earlier in the second quarter of this year.



THE IGF THEMES

Over the years, the IGF themes have been discussed around six topical points namely:

- Access and Diversity
- Security, Openness and Privacy
- Managing Critical Internet Resources
- Internet Governance for Development
- Emerging Issues and
- Taking Stock



Though there are a number cross-cutting issues around the above themes, however, there are important points germane to each subject matter. In this regard, I will be speaking on Digital Inclusion and Public Access Policy Issues: as measures for Promoting Open Knowledge Environment (OKE) in Nigeria; under the sub-theme “Access and Diversity”.



DEFINITION

Digital Inclusion is simply about getting everyone involved in what is fast becoming the most important driver of the quality of life we live, the way we work, receive medical care, communicate, entertain, study and relate with people; called the Internet; which is the bedrock of the WSIS 2015 Targets. Digital inclusion therefore is about enabling more people to gain access to the Internet and thus ensuring diversity.



DEFINITION

- Public Access Policy is concerned about deliberate guidelines and frameworks articulated to promote inclusive participation of all citizens irrespective of tribe, gender, language or disabilities with the sole aim of empowering them for national development.



DEFINITION

- Open Knowledge Environment (OKE): This is about access to repository of capacity and capability building contents, e-learning materials, products of scientific research using diverse technologies including terrestrial, mobile and satellite technologies.



PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY (PAP) ISSUES

From Business perspective, right policies have the potentials to create wealth, stimulates growth, create new jobs and promote innovation for a robust OKE. As such, PAP issues are concerned with:

- Creating environment that enables the development of new business models as a way to attract investment, promote innovation, build necessary infrastructures (eg IXPs, Cloud Share Services Centre etc) to cope with increasing local data traffic and bring the benefits of the Internet to millions more users.



PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY (PAP) ISSUES

Deployment of high speed broadband networks at fair prices in a fully competitive market providing a level playing field for all actors; to enhance access and participation in the Internet and to support the free flow of information, freedom of *responsible* expression and protection of individual rights and privacy.



PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY (PAP) ISSUES

- Supports for long term and sustainable competition through policies that promote market entry and investment to attain the greatest geographic coverage of networks.
- Promoting an optimal level of investment by creating demand for high speed networks and Internet services, in particularly in areas where governments at the Federal State and local levels play key roles such as in education, health, energy distribution and transport. **Where public investment is deemed appropriate, it should not distort market competition.**



PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY (PAP) ISSUES

- Internet infrastructure deployment and interconnection: The growth and stability of the national Internet backbone infrastructure is best served when Internet interconnection agreements are left to competition forces.



PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY (PAP) ISSUES

- In fact, business encourages the promotion of the open and interconnected nature of the Internet as it fosters industries and new business models creating demand for networks and services and allows users to benefit from the interconnected Internet networks. This promotes OKE where users can access a diversity of content.



PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY (PAP) ISSUES

- Mobile broadband spectrum
 - Mobile broadband is championing the on-going deployment of broadband services and the resulting benefits to national economic growth.
 - Access to additional radio spectrum is extraordinarily important to mobile networks, and the failure to adequately provide for the expanding demand for mobile broadband data usage threatens to limit social and economic development, innovation and competition in this critical service.



PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY (PAP) ISSUES

- Mobile broadband spectrum
 - Because the available spectrum for mobile broadband usages is very limited, and identification of additional spectrum can take quite a while, one could expect significant spectrum constraints to become apparent within the next five years.



PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY (PAP) ISSUES

- Mobile broadband spectrum
 - Following our increasing data traffic, business urges governments and the regulator to take prompt action now to ensure that sufficient spectrum is available to support the increasing demands, as it characteristically takes a number of years to allocate new spectrum resources to operators. In determining spectrum allocations, government policies should ensure adequate spectrum for broadcast services.



PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY (PAP) ISSUES

- PAP Issues are also not unconnected with legislative action to declare right to the Internet a Basic Human Right. Such action will enable governments at all levels including stakeholders like business to evolve strategies of getting more people to be connected to the Internet and



PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY (PAP) ISSUES

- Encouragement of local content development in different languages. This could be further helped by the newly introduced International Domain Names for which .yoruba, .hausa, .igbo are relevant variations without prejudice to our ccTLD ng.



DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY FOR THE PROMOTION OF OKE

Our Digital Inclusion Strategy for the promotion of Open Knowledge Environment should aim at the following:

Attracting investment and promoting innovation. This requires:

- open markets and pro-investment policies
- independent regulator
- respect for the rule of law



DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY FOR THE PROMOTION OF OKE

- network neutrality
- intellectual property rights protection and enforcement
- pro-competitive legal, policy and fair regulatory frameworks that also increase user choice regarding quality and cost of services
- independent courts
- policy approaches that foster entrepreneurship



DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY FOR THE PROMOTION OF OKE

- Enabling Nigerian cultural diversity on the Internet. The Internet provides greater access to more diverse content, including user generated content. It also reduces barriers to entry, increases the ability to cater to niche markets and improves access to information through the use of search technologies – all contributing to cultural diversity and thus enriching OKE.



DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY FOR THE PROMOTION OF OKE

- Of the Nigerian languages on the Internet, Yoruba according to Yahoo and Google currently has the highest publication and representation (@ 142,400,000 pages) followed by Hausa (53,500,000 pages) and then Igbo (46,700,000pages). A good policy framework will open up niche market to service our rich cultural diversity.



DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY FOR THE PROMOTION OF OKE

- DIS should aim at developing tools that promote access for the elderly and those with disabilities.
- It should also support stakeholders to establishing enabling environments through education initiatives, promoting innovation and creativity, public-private research and development partnerships.



WCIT AND ITRs

- Another key Internet Public Policy Issue that have critical bearing on digital inclusion for OKE is the International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs) which is billed for review at the World Conference on International Telecommunication (WCIT) scheduled for Dubai on December 3-14, 2012. The ITRs is a treaty that was developed at the 1988 World Administrative Telegraph and Telephone Conference (WATTC-88) in Australia and has not been revised since then.



WCIT AND ITRs

- The ITRs are intended to facilitate “global interconnection and interoperability” of telecommunications traffic across national borders. The ITRs will be updated and changed at the World Conference on International Telecommunications.



WHY THE ITR TREATY MATTERS?

The ITRs determine how international telecommunications services operate across borders. The treaty sets rules for things like:

- Traffic flows between telecommunication network operators.
- Quality of international services, sufficiency of facilities.



WHY THE ITR TREATY MATTERS?

- International routing, charging, accounting and billing between operators.
- The priorities that should be given to health and safety.
- The avoidance of harm to networks and services.



WHY THE ITR TREATY MATTERS?

- The treaty is under the authority of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). It represents some of the oldest regulations of their kind in existence.
- Details about the draft review by ITU is available at <http://www.itu.int/en/wcit-12/Documents/draft-future-itrs-public.pdf>.



- Considering that voice, data and video are now carried across borders over the Internet, business views that proposal in the new ITR to charge Internet traffic across border could impede the concept of digital inclusion and OKE. However, draft provision for the security and protection of ICT infrastructure, user information, privacy and data is welcome.



RECOMMENDATION

While constructive dialogue on the IG continues at the IGF, it is my recommendation that

- Government should not use ITRs to take-over the governance of the Internet as this would be counter productive. Instead, governments should engage the IG dialogue and processes through existing multi-stakeholder mechanism which has served it well and nurture it to being the critical vehicle of commerce of the modern era.



RECOMMENDATION

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- Internet should not be taxed. We are still talking about opening up access while then should it be taxed.
- However, in the rapidly changing, competitive and innovative IP based communications environment, I believe it is not advisable to resolve Internet-related technical, operational or commercial issues via a static, international treaty such as the ITRs.



STILL ON ITRs

While the existing ITRs are at a relatively high-level, viewed from today's vantage point, many proposals for revision may be more detailed, blurring the lines between traditional telecom networks and the Internet. Below is a list of issues/topics that some ITU Member States have thus far proposed to include in a revised ITR treaty.

- Mandated application of ITU-T recommendations, which could create operational issues if not compatible with Internet standards;
- Countermeasures against spam (including combating spam) and related issues such as phishing, malware, malicious code, etc;
- Dispute settlement;
- Peering arrangements and the impact on costs of international Internet traffic;



STILL ON ITRs

- Misuse of numbering, naming and addressing resources and subscriber identification;
- Quality of service;
- Cybersecurity, including security of data, of signaling and traffic information, and of billing information;
- Appropriate use of billing and payment models;
- Personal data protection;
- "New technologies" regulation;
- On-line child protection; and
- Internet addresses allocation/distribution



CONCLUSION

- Appropriate policy frameworks have always - where they are implemented with vigor, transformed the economies of the implementing countries. The impact of the telecom sector policy review more than a decade ago is still with us with data demand level surging. However, our general IG dialogue and active participation in the continental and global IG space is unrepresentative of our leading Internet traffic density of 38% in Africa.



CONCLUSION

- We therefore need to do serious catch up of nations like Kenya, Egypt and South Africa on Internet Governance policy discussion space to create necessary awareness on IG policy issue among our citizens. This is to say that the NIGF Secretariat should be empowered with appropriate budgetary provision to transform the IG space in Nigeria.



CONCLUSION

- It is also important to applaud government interventions through Universal Service Provision Fund and the National IT Development Fund (NITDF) to fast-track access at the underserved sector. However, unimpressive project implementation reports indicated best practices need to be incorporated for project sustainability and Return on Investment.



- Finally, the more we talk about policy issues the better the results we get on our development curve. Therefore, let the dialogue continue.

Thank you.

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