

PRESENTATION ON NEW ICT INITIATIVE FOR ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT

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The Internet today, is the Testament of all Human endeavour.

The Information Society takes relevance from the Declaration of Principles signed in 2003 by the Heads of State and Governments at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva.

It reads, 'We, the representatives of the peoples of the world, assembled in Geneva from 10-12 December 2003 for the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, declare our common desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where **everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life**, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It goes on to acknowledge the challenge 'to harness the potential of information and communication technology to promote the MDGs.

The Principles of the Information Society

Information and communication infrastructure: an essential foundation for an inclusive information society

1. Connectivity is a central enabling agent in building the Information Society. Should be Universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to ICT infrastructure and services.
2. A well-developed network infrastructure and applications, should be easily-accessible and affordable, and making greater use of broadband and other innovative technologies.
3. Policies that create a favourable climate for stability, predictability and fair competition at all levels should be developed.

4. The use of ICTs in all stages of education, training and human resource development should be promoted.
5. Content creators, publishers, and producers, should play an active role in promoting the Information Society.

Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

6. Strengthening the trust framework, including information security and network security, authentication, privacy and consumer protection, is a prerequisite for the development of the Information Society and for building confidence among users of ICTs.
7. Spam is a significant and growing problem for users, networks and the Internet as a whole. Spam and cyber-security should be dealt with at appropriate national and international levels.
8. **The Internet** has evolved into a global facility available to the public and its governance should constitute a core issue of the Information Society agenda. The international management of the Internet should be multilateral, transparent and democratic, with the full involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations. It should ensure an equitable distribution of resources, facilitate access for all and ensure a stable and secure functioning of the Internet, taking into account multilingualism.
9. The management of the Internet encompasses both technical and public policy issues and should involve all stakeholders and relevant intergovernmental and international organizations. In this respect it is recognized that:
 - a) Policy authority for Internet-related public policy issues is the sovereign right of States. They have rights and responsibilities for international Internet-related public policy issues;
 - b) The private sector has had and should continue to have an important role in the development of the Internet, both in the technical and economic fields;
 - c) Civil society has also played an important role on Internet matters, especially at community level, and should continue to play such a role;
 - d) Intergovernmental organizations have had and should continue to have a facilitating role in the coordination of Internet-related public policy issues;
 - e) International organizations have also had and should continue to have an important role in the development of Internet-related technical standards and relevant policies.

Plan of Action

The Information Society will be realized in cooperation and solidarity by Governments and all other stakeholders.

- Governments have a leading role in developing and implementing comprehensive, forward looking and sustainable national e-strategies. The private sector and civil society, in dialogue with governments, have an important consultative role to play in devising national e-strategies.
- The commitment of the private sector is important in developing and diffusing information and communication technologies (ICTs), for infrastructure, content and applications. The private sector is not only a market player but also plays a role in a wider sustainable development context.
- The commitment and involvement of civil society is equally important in creating an equitable Information Society, and in implementing ICT-related initiatives for development.
- International and regional institutions, including international financial institutions, have a key role in integrating the use of ICTs in the development process and making available necessary resources for building the Information Society and for the evaluation of the progress made.

Based on internationally agreed development goals, indicative targets for improving connectivity and access in the use of ICTs in promoting the objectives of the Plan of Action, were set to be achieved by 2015. These targets may be taken into account in the establishment of the national targets, considering the different national circumstances:

- a) to connect villages with ICTs and establish community access points;
- b) to connect universities, colleges, secondary schools and primary schools with ICTs;
- c) to connect scientific and research centres with ICTs;
- d) to connect public libraries, cultural centres, museums, post offices and archives with ICTs;
- e) to connect health centres and hospitals with ICTs;
- f) to connect all local and central government departments and establish websites and email addresses;
- g) to adapt all primary and secondary school curricula to meet the challenges of the Information Society, taking into account national circumstances;

- h) to ensure that all of the world's population have access to television and radio services;
- i) to encourage the development of content and to put in place technical conditions in order to facilitate the presence and use of all world languages on the Internet;
- j) to ensure that more than half the world's inhabitants have access to ICTs within their reach.

GHANA'S ICT POLICY FOR ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT

The process of ICT policy development was commenced in August 2002. The consultations at the University of Cape Coast was held on 26 March 2003.

The objective of the Policy has been to engineer an ICT led socio-economic development process with the potential to transform Ghana into a middle income, information-rich knowledge-based and technology-driven economy and society.

The focus areas are:

- Accelerated Human Resource Development
- Promoting ICTs in Education
- Facilitating Government Administration and Service Delivery – promoting e-Government and Governance.
- Facilitating the Development of the Private Sector.
- Developing an Export-Oriented ICT Products and Services Industry.
- Modernisation of Agriculture and the development of an Agro-Business Industry.
- Developing a Globally Competitive Value-Added Services Sector.
- Deployment and Spread of ICTs in the Community.
- Promotion of National Health.
- Rapid ICT and Enabling Physical Infrastructure Development.
- Research and Development, Scientific and Industrial Research Capacity Development.
- Legal, Regulatory and Institutional Framework Provisions
- Promoting Local and Foreign Direct Investment Drive in ICTs
- Facilitating National Security and Law and Order.