

UGANDA

**UGANDA'S WORKING DOCUMENT FOR THE SECOND PREPARATORY
MEETING FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION
SOCIETY (WSIS)
17TH-28TH FEBRUARY 2003
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

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1 INTRODUCTION

The UN General Assembly decided to convene a world summit on Information Society through resolution 56/183 in 2001. It was further decided that the summit would be held in two phases with the first phase to be held from 10 to 12 December 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland. It will address the broad range of themes concerning the Information Society and adopt a Declaration of Principles and plan of action, addressing the whole range of issues related to the Information Society. The second phase of the summit will take place Tunis hosted by the Government of Tunisia in 2005. Development themes will be a key focus in this phase, and it will assess progress that has been made and adopt any further plan of action to be taken.

Uganda is a member of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

and was elected to the ITU Council in September 2002 during the Plenipotentiary Meeting in Marrakech, Morocco. Uganda indeed welcomes the holding of the World Summit on Information Society due to the anticipated benefits, which include among others; to develop and foster a clear statement of the political will and concrete plan of action for achieving the goals of the information society, while reflecting fully all the interests of the different stakeholders.

The rapid developments witnessed during the recent years in the field of ICT directly impact on the economic, social and cultural life and are now broadly linked to the ability of countries to keep pace with the advances. The disparity among countries as measured by the digital divide separating them is a major challenge facing the developing countries in regard to economic revival and the guarantee of a secure future for their people.

Uganda is consequently working within the scope of a comprehensive and integrated plan intended to promote the communications technology sector with a view to supporting the country's development effort and fulfilling the requirements for boosting investment and opening up the economy to the outside world in the context of an external environment characterized by economic globalization, competition in trade, industry and technology.

One of the objectives of WSIS is to reach an agreement on a united global vision of the nature of information society and on harmonious procedures for its establishment through the development of political and regulatory approaches, as well as networks and services in various countries of the world.

In this regard, there is the need:

- (i) To raise awareness of the new challenges, which the world will face

as a result of the concepts associated with economic globalization, including the adoption of strategies encompassing approaches and time frames in line with the general pattern of development of the global communication and information society.

- (ii) The integration of and overlap among the different areas of concern (structural, technological, cultural, economic, social and gender) in developing the communication and information society, which calls for wide scale consultation in different areas of relevance among stakeholders in the public and private sector and the general civil society.

2 THE POLICY, LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR ICT DEVELOPMENT IN UGANDA

The current status of ICT in Uganda has been influenced by various Policies, Statutes, Laws, Acts and Regulations, passed and enacted in the last 10 years. These have, among other things, brought about liberalization in the various social/economic sectors that have led to impressive economic performance. The more relevant ones are briefly described below:

2.1 Relevant Policies, Statutes And Acts

2.1.1 The Press and Journalist Statute, 1995

The Statute extended Article 29(1) (*Freedom of expression*) of the Constitution to the print media. It also created the Media Council, the National Institute of Journalists of Uganda and a Disciplinary Committee within the Media Council. The Council is responsible for regulating eligibility for media ownership and requires journalists to register with the National Institute of Journalists of Uganda.

2.1.2 The Electronic Media Statute, 1996

The Statute created a licensing system, under the Broadcasting

Council, for radio and television stations, cinemas, and videotape rental businesses. The purchase, use, and sale of television sets was also to be subject to licensing by the Council.

2.1.3 The Uganda Communications Act, 1997

The Telecommunications Policy was enacted in 1996. The main objective behind the policy was to increase the penetration and level of telecommunication services in the country through private sector investment rather than government intervention. The Communications Policy led to the enactment of the Uganda Communications Act in 1997 which resulted in the establishment of the Uganda Communications Commission as an independent Regulator to regulate the Communications Sector and ensure its orderly development. The Act further led to the licensing of a Second National Operator to compete with the incumbent, Uganda Telecom Limited, which was later divested by Government to a consortium of private companies through sell of 51% shares.

2.1.4 The Rural Communications Development Policy, 2001

The main objective of the policy is to provide access to basic communication services within reasonable distance to all people in Uganda.

2.1.5 The Proposed National ICT Policy

In order for developments in the ICT sector to be addressed systematically, government has formulated an ICT Policy Framework so as to meet the challenges and harness the underlying potentials and opportunities.

3 UGANDA'S VISION FOR ICT DEVELOPMENT

“A Uganda where national development, especially human development and good governance, are sustainably enhanced, promoted and accelerated by efficient application and use of ICT, including timely access to information.”

4 UGANDA'S PROPOSED INPUT TO THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND PLAN OF ACTION TO THE WORLD SUMMIT ON INFORMATION SOCIETY

Having considered the report of PrepCom 1

Taking note of the African Regional Conference for WSIS (Bamako, 28-30th of May 2002), The Istanbul Action Plan, and Resolution Plen/7 (Marrakech, 2002) and its annexes concerning ITU input to the World Summit on Information Society,

And acknowledging the different contributions made by the international community in the process of preparation for the World Summit on the Information Society,

The Government of Uganda would like to call for endorsement and incorporation of the following themes in the declaration of principles or of action plan of the World Summit on the Information Society:

Theme (1): Infrastructure: financing, deployment and sustainability

Key Strategic Issues:

1. Any action to deal with infrastructure and content development should stem from a national “e-strategy” reflecting each country's conditions and priorities. To ensure sustainability of the e-strategies relevant stakeholders should be involved in their development and

implementation and appropriate financial and technical support offered to developing e-strategies.

2. The urgent need to mobilize massive resources for investments in information and communication technology in the developing countries especially the least developed countries.
3. The need for the provision of ICT equipment at the lowest cost.
4. Special attention should be given to inclusion of remote and underserved areas and disadvantaged groups including women, youth and persons with disabilities in deployment of infrastructure.
5. Enabling Public Private Partnership (PPP) for the deployment of national ICT infrastructure
6. Investing in and deploying broadband communication technologies to enhance capacity of ICT infrastructure.
7. Seek affordable and sustainable solutions for infrastructure development.
8. The need to develop and strengthen Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres.

Actions:

1.
Develop national policies and implementation mechanisms to address specific obstacles to ICT deployment.
2.
 - a) Government should source financing for ICT innovations in order to turn them into productive enterprises.
 - b) ICT development debt swaps under the HIPC for e-government initiatives.
3.
 - a) Government should promote manufacture of ICT equipment locally.
 - b) Government should reduce and where possible waive all taxes on ICT equipment and software and put in place mechanisms for follow up

4. Establish a universal access fund for infrastructure especially geared to underprivileged areas and disadvantaged groups including women, youth and persons with disabilities.
5. Create incentives for local and Foreign Direct Investment
6.
 - a) Establish a National Information Portal to promote dissemination and access to information in the public and private sector domain
 - b) Establish a National Internet Protocol backbone network, and adequate connectivity to the Global Information Infrastructure (GII).
 - c) Establish infrastructure that addresses ICT applications of crosscutting sectors like health, education, agriculture, local administration, etc.
7.
 - a) Government to promote and support development of appropriate ICT solutions that are affordable and sustainable.
 - b) Promote and guide the establishment of community radio stations so as to increase levels of information dissemination and public participation.
8.
 - a) Government should promote and where necessary invest in strengthening libraries, archives and documentation centers.
 - b) Create national and regional Resource Centres.

Theme (2): Identifying and overcoming barriers to the achievement of the information society

Key Strategic Issues:

1. Addressing the obstacle of lack of awareness about ICT usages/benefits as being a major and prevalent hindrance to the establishment of the Information society in developing countries
2. Linguistic diversity with respect to content.
3. Lack of skills for effective utilization of ICTs
4. Absence of ICT policy
5. Concentration of ICTs in capital city

Actions:

1.
Launching national e-awareness campaigns concerning ICT usage/benefits to both men and women.
2.
 - a) The government in collaboration with relevant partners to develop freely accessible language education materials and have them appropriately disseminated while at the same time translating key information resources into local dialects.
 - b) The government to work with local authorities to develop indigenous information content in various formats, taking into account the special needs of disadvantaged groups.
 - c) Adoption and development of national/regional languages.
3.
Address the literacy levels through universal educational programmes.
4.
Government should expeditiously conclude ICT policy formulation process.
- 5.

Government should increase incentives for investment in underserved and rural areas.

Theme (3): The role of Government, the business sector and civil society in the promotion of ICTs for development

Key Strategic Issues:

1. Need for governments to create enabling policy, legal and regulatory environment for ICT development
2. Need for more private sector investment in ICT infrastructure and services
3. Civil Society should engage the creation of awareness, sensitization, mobilization and participation in activities for ICT development.
4. Establishment of public, private sector and civil society partnerships in building the information society.

Actions:

1.

- a) Put in place legal and regulatory frameworks, which define the nature of public interest obligations and civic responsibilities of companies that deal in communications business, especially the broadcasters who use publicly owned frequencies.
- b) Develop the necessary policies that provide for preparation and transition to a knowledge-based society.
- c) Ensure that policy, legal and regulatory frameworks created for ICT development incorporate the gender perspective.
- d) Mainstream ICT development and sustenance in Government budgets.

2.

Set up an enabling environment, including an incentive scheme for joint ventures and private investment with special attention to increased local ownership and/or participation.

3.

Establish mechanisms for coordination of programs of government agencies, NGOs and development partners.

4.

Encouraging partnership of international organizations with governments and local private companies to develop ICT applications and solutions.

Theme (4): Education, training and human resource development

Key Strategic Issues:

1. Giving special attention to disadvantaged segments of the population (youth, women, people with disabilities etc) through innovative partnerships and build capacity to effectively utilize ICTs.
2. All ICT initiatives should have emphasis on capacity building, especially with respect to e-government and e-commerce, technology transfer and access.
3. By virtue of its being the largest potential client for ICT deployment and in view of the size of Government authorities in developing countries, training for government officials would have a high value added.
4. There is need to establish ICT standards authorities to standardize, coordinate ICT training as well as ensuring adherence to professional ethics.
5. Taking into account media convergence, ICT integration into media training is essential to keep abreast with opportunities offered by new technologies like on-line journalism.
6. There is need to identify e-champions
7. Limited number of specialized ICT training centers.
8. Lack of incentives for public and private sector partnerships.
9. There is need to build capacity for ICT equipment installation and maintenance.

Actions:

1.
 - a) Government in partnership with civil society to increase opportunities for training of women, youth and persons with disabilities taking into account special consideration underprivileged areas.
 - b) Establish ICT training schemes to promote adult literacy and innovative learning models.
2.

Set up mechanisms that promote collaboration among professional, industry and training institutions so as to build appropriate human resources capacity.
3.

Conduct ICT skills training for Government employees.
4.

Set up ICT Standards Authority.
5.

Integrate ICT in mainstream educational curricula as well as other literacy programs and provide for equitable access by pupils and/or students at all levels.
6.

Government, Civil Society and business community should pool together people who have demonstrated leadership in championing the information society.
7.

Develop and manage ICT Centres of Excellence to provide basic and advanced ICT training. The centers of excellence should be spread evenly to regional and district levels to bring services nearer to the people.
8.

Provide appropriate incentives to public and private sector partners in order to ensure contribution to skills development in the ICT sector.

9.

Provide technical assistance and training for communication experts in the installation and maintenance of ICT equipment.

Theme (5): Access to information and communication technologies

Key Strategic Issues:

1. The need to build and strengthen capacity to ensure equitable distribution and accessibility of ICT taking into account infrastructure, affordability, relevant content and awareness.
2. The need to strengthen the Public-Private Partnerships in infrastructure and content development.
3. The harmonization of individual privacy with the security of the country and preservation of cultural heritage.

Actions:

1.
 - a) Establish coordinated sectoral policies that encourage and promote access to and affordable use of infrastructure.
 - b) Review the licensing regimes to ensure access to a wide range of ICT services especially in the rural/underserved population.
 - c) Ensure that ICT facilities are provided at levels of cost, which match the ability of the majority of users to pay, so as to reduce gender and spatial disparities in information access.
 - d) Localize the content for relevance and access for multilingual users.
 - e) Initiate an e-government programme to digitize public domain information and make it available through Internet web sites, public library systems and other appropriate dissemination media.
2.
 - a) Strengthen incentives scheme to encourage investors to extend

services to rural areas.

- b) Provide for, and ensure the meeting of, rollout obligations in licenses issued for infrastructure development.
- c) Develop ICT long-term plan with set targets, which should be in congruence with the national and regional developments

3.

- a) Increase accessibility to government information and ensure uniform practices in its distribution.
- b) Create a national information grid (highway) to provide a central reference point for all development information with counterparts for use at the local level.

Theme (6): Information network security

Key Strategic Issues

- 1. Capacity to implement network security infrastructure and mechanisms.
- 2. Laws and regulations of electronic data, information security and business security.
- 3. The need to develop and harmonize regional laws and regulations.
- 4. The need to increase security consciousness.

Actions:

- 1.
 - a) Deploy appropriate infrastructure for enforcement of network security.
 - b) Develop human resource capacity to ensure network security.
 - c) Develop, implement and monitor programmes to create public awareness about rights and responsibilities regarding proprietary information.
- 2.
 - a) Formulate, revise and update the relevant laws in order to provide

adequate legal protection for proprietary indigenous and foreign information.

- b) In reviewing and updating the relevant laws, the promotion of principles underlying exemptions to the protection of intellectual property rights should be taken into account, such that the privacy of all citizens should not be prejudiced.

3.

- a) Develop national information standards that should be harmonized at the regional level.
- b) Domesticating international electronic and media laws on, for instance e-commerce, to suit the local situation.

4.

- a) Create awareness on a national level for the need of information security.
- b) Regular monitoring of the network for possible intrusions, virus attacks and illegal activities.

Theme (7): Development of a policy and regulatory framework

Key Strategic Issues

1. Establishment of legal and regulatory frameworks that would ensure a coordinated and regulated approach to overall development of ICT in the country.
2. Development of overarching national ICT policies, institutions and regulations that take into account and strengthen the Industrial policies, telecommunications policies, science and technology policies, and information and communication policies and other sectoral policies.
3. Need to address concerns in the areas of intellectual property rights, privacy, security of information, confidentiality, piracy, censorship

and info-ethics, which have become major issues to technological advancements.

4. Need for fair competition and private investment in the ICT sector with particular emphasis on development and encouragement of local participation including specific incentives for investing in ICT.
5. The use of ICT in the stimulation of production, storage, and dissemination of in-country information and knowledge in both the public and private sector.
6. Promote a conducive environment for media pluralism that will enhance cultural identity and national sovereignty.
7. The need for gender mainstreaming in information and communication programmes and in ICT development.
8. Provide for establishment of an enabling and desirable legal and regulatory framework that among other things takes into account the convergence of technologies.
9. The need to facilitate, encourage and support Research and Development in ICT.
10. Enhance collaboration and co-ordination in ICT development at the local, regional and international level.

Actions:

1.
 - a) Develop and manage mechanisms that involve the public and stakeholders in the policy formulation and development process, for ICT.
 - b) Facilitate development of content and general dissemination of information for governance, illiteracy eradication or any other development agenda.
 - c) Provide for, and ensure the meeting of, rollout obligations in licenses issued for infrastructure development.

- d) Develop a regulatory system that will discourage mono-media or cross-media concentration, as well as mergers.
- e) Create a mechanism for redress in respect of complaints related to ICT regulation or policy decisions and actions of government and private service providers.
- f) Review existing laws, taking into account other suitable or relevant laws elsewhere, and design a new legal framework that promotes and supports ICT policy objectives, while taking cognizance of major crosscutting issues like privacy, security, intellectual property rights and copyrights, without unduly restricting public access to information.
- g) Put in place legal and regulatory frameworks, which define the nature of public interest obligations and civic responsibilities of companies that deal in communications business, especially the broadcasters who use publicly owned frequencies.
- h) Translation into law of international treaties such as the WIPO agreements, ITU resolutions, UNCITRAL on e-commerce, etc. to provide regulatory certainty to investors.

2.

Establish coordinated sectoral policies that encourage and promote access to and affordable use of infrastructure

3.

- a) Accord due regard, recognition and protection of intellectual assets.
- b) Ensure quality through the institution of a code of conduct to govern relations between the private sector and representative bodies, as well as ensuring observance of professional and business ethics.
- c) Establish info-ethics councils for propagation and enforcement of info-ethics.

4.

Establish and maintain a licensing and regulatory regime that

promotes fair competition.

5.

- a) Establish initiatives that create awareness of the potential of ICTs in government and business operations.
- b) Enhance ICT use beyond basic applications to include decision support, accounting, computer aided learning, manufacturing, design etc, by developing customized software.

6.

Institute a requirement for a minimum percentage of development information content for the various forms of media (Public service, community service or commercial).

7.

- a) Facilitate and encourage participation of women and other disadvantaged groups in the ICT policy development and implementation process.
- b) Ensure gender considerations are taken into account in development and implementation of national actions in ICT.

8.

- a) Harmonize the laws and regulations governing the different constituent sectors of ICT.
- b) Integrate the existing regulatory framework and institutions to address the specific and crosscutting issues in ICT.

9.

Provide incentives, including tax-relief for research and development in ICT.

10.

Provide for co-ordination of various initiatives by government departments/agencies, companies, NGOs and individuals to maximize resource allocation and utilization.

THEME (8): ICT Applications (education, health, culture, poverty eradication, government, employment, business)

Key Strategic Issues

1. Recognizing the potential and enabling element of information and communication technologies as a tool for equitable and sustainable national development, with specific emphasis on poverty eradication.
2. The need to create opportunities and empowerment by provision of access to local and global markets and promotion of rural development.
3. Social services delivery, reduction of vulnerability to natural disasters as well as reducing isolation of communities and providing immediate linkage to the modern world.
4. Improved transparency and governance through availability and use of ICT.
5. Modernization of private sector through improved market access, sales, trade and knowledge of business trends.
6. Duplication of efforts and programs in various sectors.

Actions

1.
 - a) Create an enabling environment for public and private sector participation in promoting ICT awareness programs
 - b) Develop, implement, monitor and regularly circulate a comprehensive public awareness campaigns on ICT.
2.
 - a) Encourage development of ICT specific and ICT enables SMEs in all sectors.
 - b) Developing countries should give preference to local partners in ownership of ICT initiatives and procurement of ICT services and equipment, to create employment and build local capacity in ICT

development and management.

3.

Develop ICT applications in the various sectors (including health, education, agriculture, local administration, etc) with a view to enhance the quality of services and efficiency in service delivery.

4.

a) Initiate an e-government programme to enhance applications in all sectors of development.

b) Utilize the local authorities structures to facilitate information flow from the grassroots to the center and vice versa.

c) Introduction of new management and control methods in both public and private sectors to facilitate enterprise resource management.

d) Include budgeting for ICT equipment and services in the sectoral and national budgets.

5.

a) Develop national business information resource centres to promote sharing information on local business opportunities, link local businesses with foreign partners, technology transfer, financing and, strengthen capacity in business negotiations among others.

b) Encourage financial institutions to recognize ICT as a viable sector for investment support.

6.

Develop national programs that encourage sharing of infrastructure, services and expertise.

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT for the WSIS 1/2/2003