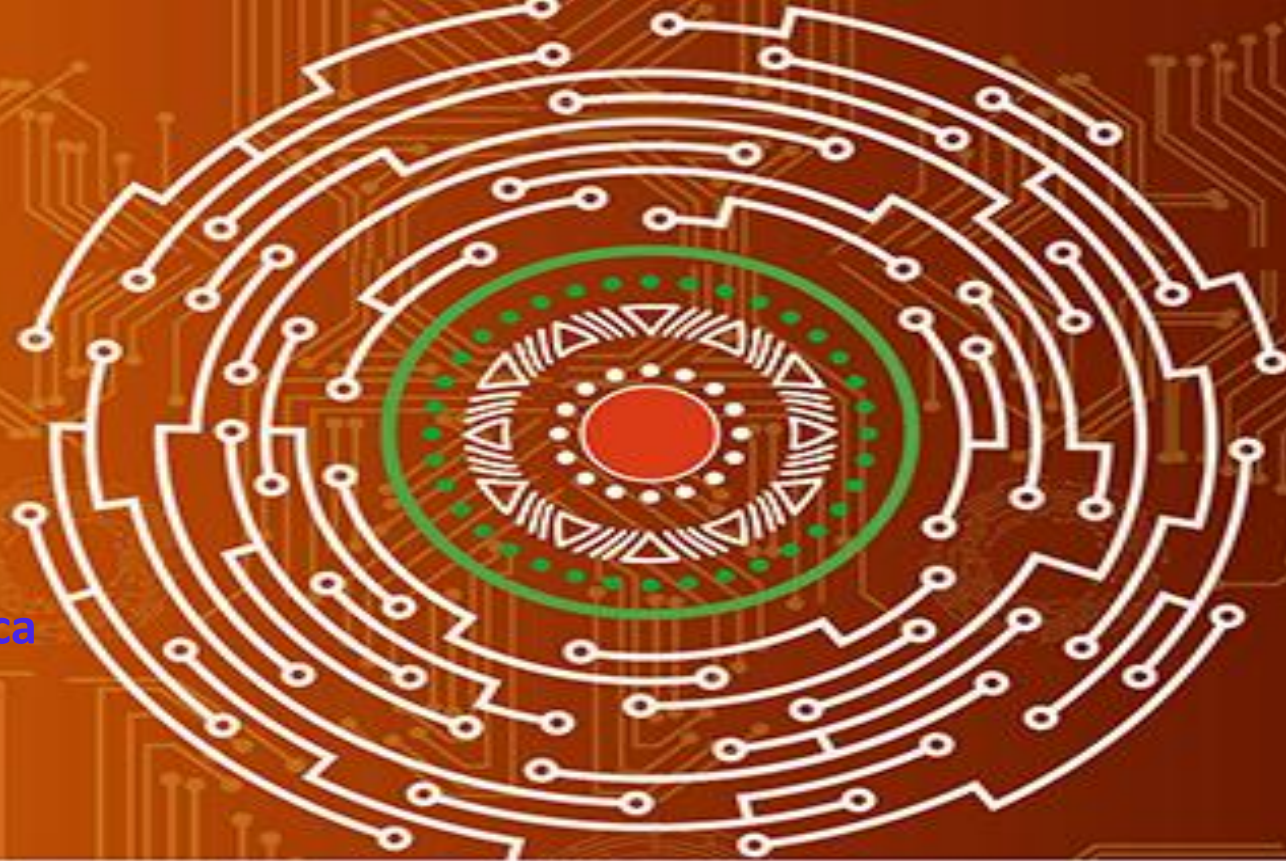


ITUEvents

# First Digital African Week

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Prioritization of barriers to developing and  
sustaining Smart Cities and Communities in Africa  
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Commission – UCC)



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# Status Quo

## Africa is the world's most rapidly urbanization continent,

- Over 40% of the total population reside in cities (with mainly the young age)- especially in the Sub-Saharan.
- The development of infrastructure and industries has not kept pace with the growth in urban population (colonial set up)

## Urbanization presents challenges

- Infrastructure and service shortage (75% have no access to safe drinking water)
- Mushrooming of slums (60% live in slums)
- Pollution (poor sewage systems, weak waste )
- Poverty, crime, unemployment, etc.

## People are generally not very rich in Africa

# Transition to smart cities

The smart city concept may have different meanings in different individuals, cultures, societies, countries, regions etc.

- Urbanization, too much activity (traffic jam, night life, pollution, replacement of farmland with tall buildings etc), Technology driven activities, Order, etc.

Some countries (or urban governments) are embracing the compelling environmental, technological, financial and social aspects towards smart city development.

Others are waiting onto the political decisions, laws and policies, aid/support, maintaining the BAU.

# Challenges of developing smart cities

Assuming that there is only a single model for a smart city, and not adapting to different models according to place, culture, life style (We are not building smart cities, but transitioning).

AI and the people's collective intelligence are failing to mix (life becomes too fast and the people become frustrated when they can't cop with the speed)

# Barriers to developing smart cities and communities

## Decision Makers

(facing unforeseen challenges)



- Capacity (when they don't know block progress)
- Perceptions (existing governance still aligned to old set up)
- No relatable policies/laws on smart cities
- Administrative bottlenecks (corruption)
- Concerns of privacy protection in the data regime

## Social and economical

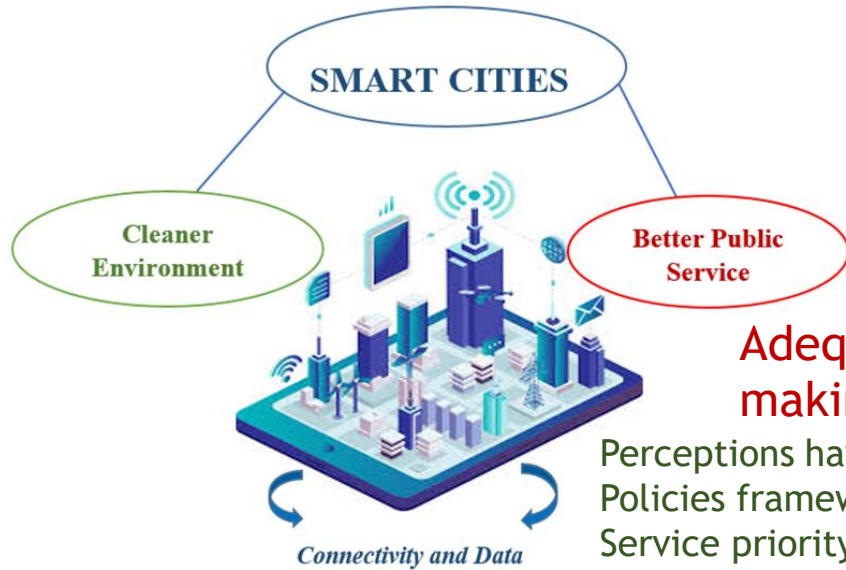
- Cost of transitioning
- Government priorities
- Corruption
- Multiculturalism, religion
- Illiteracy
- Perception and myths
- Affordability (poverty in general)
- Connectivity (access to electricity (45%), internet, interruptions, etc)
- Inequalities - gender divide right from homes



## Environmental

- Increasing urbanization has compromised environmental quality
- Ageing infrastructure (pipe leakage, high energy use, etc)
- Climate change due to urban sprawl- deforestation, encroaching on wetlands

# Prioritizing the barriers



- Adequate decision making
- Social and economic
- Environment



**Social and economical**  
 Improving basic literacy levels  
 Empower the informal (*make them part of the transition process*)

Build on existing infrastructure;  
*building blocks are already available - technological, physical, social*  
 Bring the technology to the people  
 Create more cities - reduce urbanization

## Environmental

Balance of environmental impact of a smart city Vs those of non smart city (resource and energy efficiency)  
 Subsidies for adoption of greener ICT solutions  
 Increase the enabling effects of ICTs; *efficiency, substitution, support systemic effects*



## Adequate decision making

Perceptions have to change  
 Policies frameworks and strategies  
 Service priority (ICT, energy, to be top among budget allocation in gov'ts, physical infrastructure)  
 Affordable access and availability to broadband for all,  
 Even better infrastructure development- renewable energy sources (Africa is gifted), addressing the basic need  
 Sustainability of the informal ecosystem (should sit and plan with them)

- Meeting the needs of citizens
- Solving challenges of people, society and communities

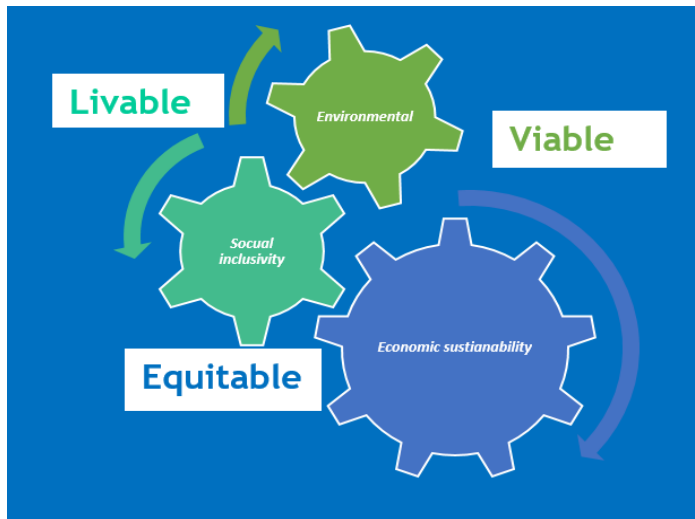


Coordinated package of essential infrastructure and services needed

## Interconnecting distinct sectors

# The future will be determined by our attitudes or else it is a lost cause

- The decision makers are priority in the discussions of the transition to smart cities, because we can't start or move forwards until they have changed their perceptions about the role of ICTs in transforming the communities.
- Community engagement is key to efforts of transitioning to a smart city.
- The needs and challenges are different from one city to another. So, the solutions will vary as well, but technology will undoubtedly play a key role.
- Sustainability has to be core of the discussions as well.



*Inputs: Policies, awareness, infrastructure, collaborations, the will*



Thank  
you