

Questions for journalists

The African Regional Preparatory Conference for the WSIS

Financing the Information Society

1. How will the financing of ICT infrastructure be addressed? With public funding? Is there a role for the private sector?
2. What are the activities in the development of ICT infrastructure, human resources and services which need additional resources?
3. What is the Task Force on Financing Mechanisms established through the recommendation of the WSIS declaration?
4. What is the Digital Solidarity Fund?
5. What are the options at domestic, subregional, regional and international levels in financing the information society?

Indicators and benchmarking

1. What is being done to put in place reliable basic statistical indicators to gather and consolidate data on the penetration, use and impact of ICTs in the African continent?
2. What is the contribution of the Scan-ICT initiative to the development of information society indicators for monitoring the penetration, impact and effectiveness of ICT applications in Africa?
3. What is the role of National Statistical Offices in the collection and dissemination of ICT statistics?
4. What should African position be on ICT indicator issues at regional and global fora?

ICTs for socio-economic development

1. What are the contributions of ICTs to socio-economic development through sectoral applications in commerce, health, education, government, agriculture, environment, tourism and culture, job creation and access to rural areas and disenfranchised groups?
2. Are ICT programmes in Africa geared towards creating enabling environments for giving people an opportunity to improve their lives?

3. Are initiatives undertaken in the ICT arena to harness a country's socio-economic empowerment in Africa sustainable with in-country human resources, budgetary allocations and supporting regulatory environment?
4. Though ICT for development envisages information access to all, does our political and bureaucratic systems in African nations ready with the attitudinal change that is needed to make information accessible to the citizens?
5. What are the prerequisites for African countries to embark on ICT4D projects?
6. What is the way forward to attain the goals of the WSIS Geneva Plan of Action keeping in mind the national and regional realities and experiences of Africa?

Access and Infrastructure

1. What are the enabling environment issues that constrain the development of e-economy and Africa's Information Society?
2. How can Africa's information and communication technology infrastructure be upgraded?
3. How does a Universal Access Service Fund play a role in the development of infrastructure?
4. What are the experiences and lessons learnt in the quest for achieving the common vision of building an inclusive Information Society within the African and global context?
5. What are the challenges, opportunities and issues in creating information societies through effective regulation?
6. What are the steps taken so far in harmonization of regulation at the regional level?

Industrialization

1. What is the level of the African digital economy?
2. What is required from African countries to develop the African digital?
3. What are the relevant partnerships needed by different stakeholders to achieve ICT industrialization goals?
4. Are there African countries that have developed ICT industrialization initiatives? If yes, how can these be shared across the continent?

5. How can ICTs industrialisation initiatives in countries such as India, Singapore and Malaysia be replicated in Africa?

Internet Governance

1. What are the issues affecting Africa in the present Internet Governance system?
2. Is Africa participating in the global debate on Internet Governance? If yes, what is the level of participation?
3. Can you give examples on how national e-strategies/ NICI plans have addressed Internet Governance related issues?
4. What is the existing model of Internet Governance? Is it the "ideal" model or is there one being proposed?
5. What concrete activities would you suggest to strengthen Africa's role in the global ICT policymaking process?

E-Strategies (National, Regional, Local and Sectoral)

1. How many African countries have developed e-strategies (also known as National Information and Communication Infrastructure – NICI policies) so far?
2. What are the main sectors addressed by the policy?
3. How are the policies addressing such issues as poverty eradication, economic recovery, human resource development, peace and security?
4. How many African countries have developed plans to implement the policies?
5. Are governments allocating adequate budget to implement the items listed in their national information and communication plans? If no, what funding sources are available?
6. Has the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process contributed in the sensitization of countries that do not have policies to start the policy development process?
7. How soon will one see benefits arising from the implementation of e-strategies? Are there examples on the ground?
8. How will new information systems introduced make Government business more efficient?

9. What kind of human and technological capacity is there to support e-government initiatives in the country?
10. What percentage of citizens have access to Internet/computers if services are online?
11. Is the appropriate legal system in place for implementing sectoral plans such as e-Commerce, e-Government, e-Education and e-Health?
12. In the absence of an appropriate infrastructure what alternatives are there for introducing e-commerce?

Multi-stakeholder Partnership

1. Who are the stakeholders involved in building an African Information Society? And what are their respective roles?
2. What aspects or components of the information infrastructure are best provided by government?
3. What alternative models, other than central budgeting, could be adopted for funding public goods, with particular emphasis on ICT4D?
4. What organisational and administrative models should be adopted for shared responsibilities between government and non-government entities?
5. What kinds of mechanisms can be established for the sustained involvement of different stakeholders (youth, members of parliament, academia, civil society and women) in the process of building an Information Society in Africa?
6. What are the practices and lessons learned for implementing an inclusive Information Society at the national and regional levels?