

ICT R&D for African Development: An Opportunity Africa Cannot Miss

By

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Outline

- **Introduction**
- **Issues and Trend in Relation to ICT R&D for African Development**
- **Development Challenges.**
- **Opportunities presented by ICT**
- **Roles of Government, Academia and Civil Society**
- **Conclusion**


Introduction

- **globalization,**
- **knowledge economy, and**
- **social inclusion in development,**
- **Africa faces unique challenges**
- **Can benefit from ICT supported by research**

Issues and trends in ICT R&D for African Development

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- Africa face many challenges when it comes to harnessing the full potential of ICT resources.
 - The trend indicates that the matter is even worse and deteriorating in remote rural areas.
 - Unreliable sources of electric power;
 - poor and/or lack of ICT infrastructure;
 - inadequate expertise and knowledge in ICT;
 - Global trends- creation, use and dissemination of knowledge is a success factor for creation of wealth, innovation and social economic development.

Development Challenges

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- Knowledge: As much as 70-80 % of economic growth is said to be due to new and better knowledge.
 - The success of national economies depends on the information infrastructure that is necessary for the generation and utilization of knowledge. Therefore broad band data communication infrastructure becomes as important to the knowledge economy as electricity was to the Industrial development.

Development Challenges




- Isolation: Countries that have little or no access to ICT facilities -considered as isolated in this context.
- Lack of Education: Lack of formalized education
- Culture of life long learning with ability to adapt continuously to changed opportunities, work practices, business models and forms of economic and social organization.
- Lack of Access to Markets:
- Access to Financial Resources/Credits:

Opportunities presented by ICT




- People networks and Community driven networks
- VOIP
- Innovation
- Knowledge

Roles of Governments, Academia CSOs

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- Legal/regulatory environment
 - Invest in R&D
 - Research coordination
 - Universal broad band infrastructure
 - Foster and undertake research

Conclusion

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- *Africa missed out on previous agricultural and industrial revolutions of the past centuries.*
 - *Now ICT is presenting the knowledge revolution in which we have to actively take part and cannot afford to miss.*
 - *ICT as an enabler has the potential to foster achievements of development objectives quickly and at lower costs.*
 - *But also ICT is an industry in its own right capable of generating wealth and employment as the Indian example has demonstrated.*
 - *Participation of Africa in the knowledge economy requires a serious investment in the broadband information infrastructure*
 - *and extensive research on how ICT can and should be used to address the development challenges of governance, poor government services delivery, poverty, disease, lack of scientific knowledge and social exclusion.*
 - *ICT R&D is, indeed, an opportunity Africa cannot afford to miss if it is to develop.*