

Mobilizing IT Professionals for WSIS and MDGs 2015; and V20 2020 Goals Realization

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1.0 Introduction

For there to be any movement by an object, a force must act on it. For any idea to gain momentum, a critical mass of force must propel it. This is the basic law of motion called the first law of Inertia. By implication, for the World Summit of Information Society (WSIS), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Vision 20 2020 goals to be a reality, there must be effective mobilization of critical stakeholders to engender their realization.

To start with, what do I mean by mobilization. Mobilization means the putting to movement or action of a group of people for the achievement of specific objective/s over a period of time. Therefore, I would like to congratulate the current IT Professionals for being a part of the movement that would transform Nigeria through Technology. The goal is a Digital Nigeria come 2015 and beyond with strong economic base in the global top twenty by the year 2020.

In tackling the topic, I will enunciate United Nations interventions on Information – Communication Technology (ICT²) for development, the meaning and imports of WSIS, MDGs, and V20 2020 and outline what your roles will be in the goals realization for Nigeria.

2.0 The UN Interventions

The general interventions of the United Nations for the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT³s) for the realisation of the Internationally Agreed Development Goals are championed by its various organs and frameworks such as the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), World Summit on Information Society (WSIS), International Telecommunication Union (ITU),

Information and Communications Technologies for Development (ICT4D), Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development (GAID), Internet Governance Forum (IGF), Internet for Development (I4D) and Internet Governance for Development (IG4D). The above are the various critical organs and frameworks of UN towards the transformation of the least developed and developing countries with ICTs.

3.0 ECOSOC

ECOSOC⁴ was established under the United Nations Charter as the principal organ to coordinate economic, social, and related work of the 14 UN specialized agencies, functional commissions and five regional commissions. The Council also receives reports from 11 UN funds and programmes. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to Member States and the United Nations system. It is responsible for:

- promoting higher standards of living, full employment, and economic and social progress;
- identifying solutions to international economic, social and health problems;
- facilitating international cultural and educational cooperation; and
- encouraging universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It has the power to make or initiate studies and reports on these issues. It also has the power to assist the preparations and organization of major international conferences in the economic, social and related fields and to facilitate a coordinated follow-up to these conferences. With its broad mandate the Council's purview extends to over 70 per cent of the human and financial resources of the entire UN system.

4.0 CSTD

The Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD⁵) is a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It was established in 1992 as a result of the restructuring and revitalisation of the United Nations in the economic, social and related

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² ICT <> IT, an equivalent relationship

³ ICTs are in 4 categories: Hardware, Software, Services and Communications

⁴ <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/index.shtml>

⁵ <http://www.unctad.org/cstd>

fields. Through this restructuring, the General Assembly abolished the former Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development (IGCSTD) and its subsidiary body, the Advisory Committee on Science and Technology for Development (ACSTD), created at the time of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, held in Vienna in 1979, and replaced them by the CSTD.

In 1998, the Council, in a further review of all its functional commissions, decided to introduce a number of changes in its membership, focus and methods of work. The Commission met for the first time in April 1993 in New York, USA. Since July 1993, the United Nations Conference on Trade And Development (UNCTAD) secretariat has been responsible for the substantive servicing of the Commission. The Commission has subsequently met in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Commission was established to provide the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council with high-level advice on relevant issues through analysis and appropriate policy recommendations or options in order to enable those organs to guide the future work of the United Nations, develop common policies and agree on appropriate actions.

In this context, the Commission acts as a forum for:

- the examination of science and technology questions and their implications for development;
- the advancement of understanding on science and technology policies, particularly in respect of developing countries and;
- the formulation of recommendations and guidelines on science and technology matters within the United Nations system.

The Commission meets annually for a period of one week (ECOSOC resolution 2002/37, reaffirmed in draft Council resolution 2003/31 of 4 June 2003.

5.0 The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The aim of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is to encourage development by improving social and economic conditions in the world's poorest countries.

The MDGs are eight international development goals that all 192 United Nations member states and at least 23 international organizations have agreed in year 2000 to achieve by the year 2015. These goals are:

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality rates

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

6.0 WSIS⁶

The UN General Assembly Resolution 56/183⁷ (21 December 2001) endorsed the holding of the **World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)** in two phases. The first phase took place in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003 and the second phase took place in Tunis, from 16 to 18 November 2005.

Geneva Phase: 10-12 December 2003

The objective of the first phase was to develop and foster a clear statement of political will and take concrete steps to establish the foundations for an Information Society for all, reflecting all the different interests at stake.

Nearly 50 Heads of state/government and Vice-Presidents, 82 Ministers, and 26 Vice-Ministers from 175 countries as well as high-level representatives from international organizations, private sector, and civil society attended the Geneva Phase of WSIS and gave political support to the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Geneva Plan of Action⁸ that were adopted on 12 December 2003.

⁶ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/basic/about.html>

⁷ http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/background/resolutions/56_183_unga_2002.pdf

⁸ http://www.itu.int/wsis/documents/doc_multi.asp?lang=en&id=1161|1160

More than 11,000 participants from 175 countries attended the Summit and related events.

Tunis Phase: 16-18 November 2005

The objective of the second phase was to put Geneva's Plan of Action into motion as well as to find solutions and reach agreements in the fields of Internet governance, financing mechanisms, and follow-up and implementation of the Geneva and Tunis documents.

Nearly 50 Heads of state/government and Vice-Presidents and 197 Ministers, Vice Ministers and Deputy Ministers from 174 countries as well as high-level representatives from international organizations, private sector, and civil society attended the Tunis Phase of WSIS and gave political support to the Tunis Commitment and Tunis Agenda for the Information Society⁹ that were adopted on 18 November 2005. **More than 19,000 participants from 174 countries** attended the Summit and related events.

There are 11 WSIS Action Lines emanating from the Tunis Agenda 2005 ranging from C1 to C11.

AL C1 is on *The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development*; and it is being facilitated by ECOSOC/UNRC¹⁰s/ITU;

AL C2 is on *Information and communication infrastructure* being facilitated by ITU;

AL C3: *Access to information and knowledge* being facilitated by ITU/UNESCO;

AL C4: *Capacity building* by UNDP/UNESCO/ITU;

AL C5: *Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs* by UNCTAD;

AL C6: *Enabling environment* by ITU;

AL C7: *ICT applications namely*

e-Government by UNDP/ITU,

e-Business by WTO¹¹/ UNCTAD/ ITU/UPU¹²,

e-Learning by UNESCO/ITU/UNIDO¹³,

e-Health by WHO/ITU,
 e-Employment by ILO¹⁴/ITU,
 e-Environment by
 WHO/WMO¹⁵/UNEP¹⁶/Habitat/ITU/ICAO¹⁷,
 e-Agriculture by FAO/ITU,
 e-Science by UNESCO/ITU/UNCTAD,
 AL C8: *Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content* by UNESCO,
 AL C9: *Media* by UNESCO,
 AL C10: *Ethical dimension of the Information Society* by UNESCO/ECOSOC,
 AL C11: *International and regional cooperation* by UNRCs/UNDP/ITU/ UNESCO/ ECOSOC.

By implication, efforts to achieve the WSIS goals wittingly target the realization of the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs) such as the Millennium Development Goals. WSIS Forum comes up every May since 2006 to review progress on the achievement of the 2015 WSIS goals. The WSIS forum this year took place on May 16-20, 2011.

7. ITU¹⁸

The **International Telecommunication Union** (*Union internationale des télécommunications*, in French) is the specialized agency of the **United Nations** which is responsible for **information and communication technologies**. ITU coordinates the shared global use of the **radio spectrum**, promotes international cooperation in assigning **satellite orbits**, works to improve telecommunication infrastructure in the developing world and establishes worldwide **standards**.

ITU also organizes worldwide and regional exhibitions and forums, such as ITU TELECOM WORLD, bringing together representatives of government and the telecommunications and ICT

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http://www.itu.int/wsis/documents/doc_multi.asp?lang=en&id=2266|2267

¹⁰ UNRCs: United Nations Resident Coordinator

¹¹ WTO: World Trade Organisation

¹² UPU: Universal Postal Union

¹³ UNIDO: United Nations Industrial Development Organisation

¹⁴ ILO: International Labour Organisation

¹⁵ WMO: World Meteorological Organisation

¹⁶ UNEP: United Nations Environmental Programme

¹⁷ ICAO: International Civil Aviation Organisation

¹⁸

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Telecommunications_Union

industry to exchange ideas, knowledge and technology.

The ITU is active in areas including broadband Internet, latest-generation wireless technologies, aeronautical and maritime navigation, radio astronomy, satellite-based meteorology, convergence in fixed-mobile phone, Internet access, data, voice, TV broadcasting, and next-generation networks.

ITU is based in Geneva, Switzerland, is a member of the [United Nations Development Group](#)^[1] and its membership includes 192 Member States and around 700 Sector Members and Associates.

8.0 ICT4D

Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D)¹⁹ is a general term referring to the application of [Information and Communication Technologies](#) (ICTs) within the fields of [socioeconomic development](#), [international development](#) and [human rights](#). ICT4D focuses on using digital technology to deliver specific development goals (most notably the [Millennium Development Goals](#)).

The concept of ICT4D can be interpreted as dealing with disadvantaged populations anywhere in the world, but is more typically associated with applications in [developing countries](#). It concerns itself with directly applying [information technology](#) approaches to [poverty reduction](#). ICTs can be applied either in the direct sense, wherein their use directly benefits the disadvantaged population, or in an indirect sense, wherein the ICTs assist aid organisations or [non-governmental organizations](#) or governments or businesses in order to improve general socio-economic conditions.

Nations are encouraged to develop their own ICT4D Strategies. Nigeria through the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) has developed its ICT4D Strategy in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

9.0 GAID²⁰

The Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development (GAID), an initiative approved by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2006, was launched after comprehensive worldwide consultations with governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical and Internet communities and academia. While the 2005 United Nations Summit emphasized the importance of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), there was a need for a truly global forum that would comprehensively address cross-cutting issues related to ICT in development.

Recognizing that no single actor is capable of achieving the MDGs in isolation, the creation of an open and inclusive platform that can broaden the dialogue on innovative ways of harnessing ICT for advancing development is crucial.

The Global Alliance is a direct response to this need. With its multi-stakeholder approach, the Alliance reaffirms the belief that a people-centered and knowledge-based information society is essential for achieving better life for all.

10.0 IGF

The **Internet Governance Forum (IGF)**²¹ is a multi-[stakeholder](#) forum for policy dialogue on issues of [Internet governance](#). It brings together all stakeholders in the internet governance debate, whether they represent governments, the private sector or civil society, including the technical and academic community, on an equal basis and through an open and inclusive process. The establishment of the IGF was formally announced by the [United Nations](#) Secretary-General in July 2006 and it was first convened in October / November 2006 in Athens, Greece; in Brazil in 2007, India 2008, Egypt 2009 and Lithuania in 2010. The 2011 edition comes up in Nairobi Kenya on September 27-30. The theme is '**Internet as a**

¹⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ICT4D>

²⁰ <http://www.un-gaid.org/About/WhatisGAID/tabid/892/Default.aspx>

²¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Governance_Forum

catalyst for change: access, development, freedoms and innovation'.

The IGF functions through the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) that meet thrice in the year and a Secretariat. Some of the IGF issues include access (to scientific data & information), diversity, openness, net-neutrality, security, critical internet resources, privacy, intellectual property and content localization. Other emerging and cross border issues include cloud computing, new media, cybersecurity and internet freedom.

11.0 CSTD WG ON IMPROVEMENT TO THE IGF

On 19 July 2010, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted by consensus resolution 2010/2 on the “Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society”. By this resolution, ECOSOC “invites the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) to establish, in an open and inclusive manner, a working group (WG) which would seek, compile and review inputs from all Member States and all other stakeholders on improvements to the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), in line with the mandate set out in the Tunis Agenda, and which would report to the Commission at its fourteenth session in 2011 with recommendation, as appropriate. This report is to constitute an input from the Commission to the General Assembly, through ECOSOC, should the mandate of the IGF be extended.

In its Resolution “Information and Communications Technologies for Development” (November 2010), the General Assembly decided to extend the mandate of the IGF. In the same Resolution, the General Assembly also underlined the need to improve the IGF “with a view to linking it to the broader dialogue on global Internet governance”²² and that particular consideration should be given to “inter alia, enhancing participation from developing countries, exploring

²² General Assembly Resolution “Information and communications technologies for development”, paragraph 17

further voluntary options for financing the Forum and improving the preparation process modalities, and the work and functioning of the Forum’s secretariat.”²³

The WG met twice in Switzerland. First on February 25-26, 2011 at the Hotel Majestic in Montreux and on March 24-25 in Geneva. Though the WG could not submit a report of specific recommendations on improvements as mandated due to insufficient time to arrive at consensus on specific recommendations, it however was able to seek, compile and review inputs from all Member States and all other stakeholders on improvements to the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), in line with the mandate set out in the Tunis Agenda. The work of the WG was captured in the report²⁴ of the Chairman of the Working Group, Mr Frederic Riehl of Switzerland.

It is expected that the suggestion²⁵ by the WG for the mandate of the group to be extended by one year which has already been accepted by the CSTD will be approved by ECOSOC at its July 4-29, 2011 session.

12.0 I4D

Internet for Development (I4D) is a term for *cheetahpolevault*²⁶ development through the expansion of the vast riches of the Internet viz broadband, mobile technologies and services (m-banking, m-governance, m-health, m-agriculture etc) and the Internet of things. With a third of the world population on the Internet (>2billion) and more than three-quarter (5.28billion:76.5%) on mobile subscription it is perceived that with hard work I4D is a platform for the realization of the IADGs.

13.0 IG4D

Internet Governance for Development is a term emanating from the Internet Governance

²³ Ibid. paragraph 19

²⁴

http://www.unctad.org/sections/un_cstd/docs/UN_WGIGF2011d07_summary_en.pdf

²⁵ http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/a66d67_en.pdf

²⁶ Cheetahpolevault is beyond leapfrogging. The frog can only go thus far but with Cheetah pole vaulting, you can imagine the coverage

Forum (IGF). It is aimed at articulating Internet governance policies that spur economic development, create jobs and prosperity for the achievement of the IADGs. Such governance issues are policies and legislation in the area of cybersecurity, CERT, IXP, Digital Signature etc.

14.0 NIGERIA's Vision 20 2020

As I earlier mentioned, the concerted UN frameworks on development such as WSIS Action Lines, ICT4D, MDGs and I4D are aimed at transforming least developed countries (LDC) and developing nations. They are aimed at bridging the digital divide, eliminating poverty and improving the living standard of people across the world especially in LDC and developing countries.

Nigeria is a developing country with large human (> 140million²⁷) and natural resources. Her GDP is about US\$350b²⁸ (PPP) with per capita a mere US\$2,500. Based on the Vision 20 2020 to grow the economy to one of the 20 largest economies in the world by the year 2020; it has projected a GDP of US\$900b by 2020. A sure enabler of this vision is the whole hearted adoption of all the above development frameworks as ICT has been clearly identified²⁹ as the enabler of development.

However, before 2020 is 2015! Can we therefore attain the WSIS & MDG goals by 2015 in Nigeria for an Information Society in which no one is left behind in the area of daily food provision, access to healthcare and basic education? My candid opinion is that we may NOT at the current trend BUT if we retool and re-strategise on the eight goals through internal partnerships among all the key stakeholders, it might be possible for the goals to be achieved. ITAN has been trying to partner with the MDG Office in the area of measuring our MDG progress and they have not been forthcoming. We don't know how they are measuring their progress and if you cannot measure your progress you cannot achieve your goals.

Nevertheless, the Nigerian Communications Commission must be commended for the gains

realised thus far on our march to 2015 especially with regard to telephony and Internet penetration. More than 60% of Nigerians have access to telephone (though mobile) compare to 0.05% in 2000. About 30% of our people are now on the Internet which put Nigeria on top of Internet users in Africa; and the figures are still rising.

As Nigeria (the fourth largest peace-keeping contributor to UN and the second largest economy in Africa) works hard to occupy a permanent UN Council seat, she must tap her full resources in the public and private sectors to engage fully all the various actions and interventions of the UN to really be a truly global player she aspires to be.

15.0 PLAN OF ACTION (for organisations)

All stakeholders have common and specific roles to play to ensure that the WSIS, MDG and V20 2020 goals are achieved in Nigeria. Some of the plans of action that readily come to mind are:

1. NCC, NITDA, Nigeria MDG Office & Galaxy Backbone must evolve a joint Action Plan Committee to synchronise workable strategies that would deliver projects for the realization of the goals. Some of these projects should include broadband access for all, increased mobility/internet applications (for. e-Government, e-Health, & e-Learning), building ICT industry standards for IT/BPO companies)
2. As a follow-up to the above, CPN now reviewing national IT curricular should ensure that its well done by engaging global service excellence firm that could help develop eSkills framework to ensure that the products of our primary and tertiary institutions are prepared for the industry for a robust digital ecosystem to evolve.
3. Every organisation should evolve its IT Policy and eStrategy for a digital Nigeria by 2015
4. Software companies/organisations should build local contents. There should be localization of content for local use and for export. Therefore, adherence to software engineering standards around CMMI, PCMM etc should be desirable. CPN, ISPON, ITAN and NITDA can help software companies enhance their processes through exposure to the Agile framework.

²⁷ 2009Nigeria Census

²⁸ 2010 est.

²⁹ GAID, WITSA, UNCSTD, ITU, ITAN, NITDA, NCC, CPN, NCS

5. We must deepen our engagement with UNECA³⁰, UNCSTD, WITSA³¹ and many other international bodies for our advantage. Intra-national and cross agency handshakes (eg between NCC & NITDA; ITAN, ATCON, NCS, ISPON, CPN, NOTAP & Galaxy) should flourish.

16.0 PLAN OF ACTION (for IT professionals)

IT Professionals in particular are to note specific interventions they can bring to bear towards the realization of the WSIS, MDG & V2020 goals.

Some of these are:

1. eStrategies framework development: If your organisation does not have its eStrategies framework for ICT project implementation in place, you could spearhead one. Once developed, there must be ownership to drive it. Nobody else will drive your vision for you unless it's not your vision.
2. Promotion of Social Networking: Every professional can enrich the WSIS space by being a part of the social networking ecosystem viz-a-viz facebook, twitter, linkedIn, blogs, voice and video content sharing etc.
3. Building your own web 2.0 platform. You can spearhead the creation of your organisation's on-line interaction platforms to open exchange of ideas and for inputs from the wider community.
4. Building capacities: Target knowledge enhancement programmes and organise mentorship programmes that impact know-how to others particularly the disadvantaged in the community e.g. women, girls and the physically challenged.
5. Be a good cyber agent for cyber security. Your increasing use of the Internet resources will build confidence on the use of the Internet and provide reliability of its associated resources. This is important to promote the vast advantages of the Internet to economic development and social cohesion than the disadvantages of its associated crimes which such presence can readily mitigate.

6. Create outsourcing opportunities. In our various offices, let us identify non-core processes that can be outsourced. This will create more jobs (digital dividends) and reduce poverty.
7. Create projects through open, transparent, and multi-stakeholder approach to attract funding. There are a number of granting organisations that would readily fund impacting intervention projects (e.g. NITDEF, USPF, ECOWAS, EU, NSF etc)
8. Use more open standard tools to promote collaborative work in software localization and access to information and knowledge.

17.0 CONCLUSION

A fundamental approach to tackling issues on the road to 2015 and 2020 is for critical stakeholders to provide Enabling Environment for new ideas (Innovation) to flourish. Such an environment should be open, transparent, inclusive (with no stakeholder left behind), multi-lateral and multi-stakeholder in composition. This is the current model of decision making at the United Nations. It's an approach that is succeeding at the United Nations Internet Governance parleys.

Innovation comes with intersection of many ideas and this when filtered through development strategies creates wealth for the people. It is for this reason that IT professionals are being mobilised to facilitate the use of ICT for the realization of the WSIS, MDG and the V20 2020 goals. The CPN IT Assembly and other such fora should continue to be avenue for mobilising IT professionals and all Nigerians (who are the beneficiaries) towards the realization of the above mentioned goals.

It is important to note that nations like South Korea, Singapore and Qatar to mention but a few, hitherto developing have already surpassed the WSIS and the MDG targets. The question I will leave you with is "would Nigeria fulfill the promise of the digital age for every Nigerian³²? Or be left behind?". In answering the question, let your thought inspire a change for a new Nigeria with your footprint.

³⁰ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

³¹ World Information Technology and Services Alliance

³² WITSA vision: "fulfilling the Promise of the Digital Age" 2010