



## CONNECT 2 CONNECT

AFFORDABLE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Pretoria, South Africa, 19th-21st July 2016

### C2C Africa 2016, review from the Conference Chair

#### Ten tips for long terms success in the Digital Era:

At the fourth annual C2C Summit, attendees from over 23 countries participated in parallel workshops and the main conference track, covering issues ranging from infrastructure and investment to capacity and cooperation.

The workshops covered the importance of holistic strategies for infrastructure development (fibre, satellite, data centres) and their wide-ranging impacts (smart city). Here are the Top Ten takeaways and tips from the conference track.

- 1. Speed of industry change:** Every technology component of the ICT spectrum is changing so fast (and converging) that regular and timely communication is needed between all stakeholders for effective sense-making, strategising and execution. This can be achieved through regular channels, media products and events. National benchmarks need to be set up to assess country progress, and on the demand side there needs to be a greater focus on simplicity of digital services and products.
- 2. Qualitative and quantitative frameworks:** There is much more to ICT adoption and creation than mere numbers of penetration levels, though these are important as well. ICTs are qualitatively changing the way we process information, connect to one another, and conduct our learning and workforce activities. This is more akin to a chemical reaction than a physical structure, to a catalytic effect than a Lego building block.
- 3. Ministry involvement:** ICTs are now affecting all ministries, not just the ICT ministry. Trade, education, agriculture, manufacturing, science, healthcare, entrepreneurship/SMEs and defence are all being transformed by the ICT wave, and thus all ministries need to have an active ICT strategy and policy. For their part, governments and nations must improve their regulatory frameworks, bring in more transparency, and ensure market stability so as to attract global ICT investment and promote local digital competencies.
- 4. The technology transformations in domains such as IoT, fibre and satellite are core drivers of inter-connectivity in Africa – but they also need to be backed up by consumer education on services delivered via smartphones, and governance alliances for frontiers such as Open Data.**



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**5. Smart City, Smart Village:** Much attention understandably focuses on the market potential of urban clustering such as Smart City, but given the size and rural population distribution of Africa, there needs to be adequate focus on Smart Village as well.

**6. Cooperation:** A stronger spirit of collaboration ('Harambe' in Swahili) is needed to advance Africa's digital agenda. In that regard, current initiatives such as 'Broadband for All' hold great promise, as well as a proposed Smart City Alliance for Africa. Already, cooperative initiatives in infrastructure sharing (eg. mobile operator towers) are transforming the mobile communications industry; more such initiatives are called for.

**7. Youth dividend:** With a median age of 19 years, Africa offers tremendous hope and opportunity for its youth, estimated at 200 million. However, many of the 70% of Sub-Saharan Africa who are under 30 years of age are unemployed – thus calling for deeper youth engagement strategies for sectors like ICTs.

**8. Gender dividends:** The digital dividend must also be extended to Africa's women and girls, but much more needs to be done to increase gender participation in ICT agendas, education and industries. Otherwise, it is difficult for a country or region to win the global ICT race with only half its team.

**9. Innovation and reinvention:** Success in entering the ICT game will depend on innovation and creativity, but long-term success will come only from sustainable knowledge strategies and business excellence. This calls for greater proficiency in a range of disciplines such as design thinking, knowledge management, agile development, lean startup, and ecosystem innovation. A few examples are already emerging, such as the rollout of streaming video content services by some mobile operators in Africa.

**10. Long-term capacity building:** In the long run, there must be more cooperation in publishing, research and teaching between industry and academia in Africa. Overseas exposure and expertise are great, but there must also be local capacity in academic institutions with deep industry impact.

Many of these issues will be addressed in Extensia's subsequent events such as C2C, Innovation Africa Digital Summit and FutureSat. Future topics in such events will include power generation and distribution; crowdsourcing and crowdfunding; urban hotspots (MuniFi) and TV WhiteSpace; and incubation/acceleration hubs for startups and corporate R&D.

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