

Sum-pow-ur
- Health Crest

REMARKS BY THE PERMANENT SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS, DR. BITANGE NDEMO,
DURING THE 4TH WEB FOR DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCE AT UNITED NATIONS
HEADQUARTERS- NAIROBI, 28TH
NOVEMBER 2007.

The UNDP Resident representative in Kenya Mrs. Elizabeth Lwanga,
Representative of the Assistant Secretary General, Jason Bellone,
The Representative of the Ex Director UN – Habitat, Mr. Nicholas
You,

Delegates,

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to welcome you all to this conference. I believe there are some participants who are visiting Kenya for the first time, *Karibuni Kenya*. I am also proud to take this opportunity to encourage you to tour other parts of the country to sample the diverse beauty of our country and our people.

This conference gives us a forum for us to explore ways in which we can

use internet to accelerate achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Internet as it were is an important medium for communication and henceforth relevant towards the Socio-Economic development of a Nation.

Realization
= Governance
- Planning
- Justice

I acknowledge the fact that Kenya was indeed selected as the ideal host country for this conference in a bid to allow participants to see, at first hand, the achievements and challenges that developing countries face in trying to bridge the digital divide. This experience, I believe, will go a long way in enabling us generate new ideas and solutions on utilizing the web to achieve these goals.

As a matter of fact, the Kenyan government has embraced a common vision and strategy for an information and knowledge based society that recognizes Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) as a platform for socio-economic development as well as a means of bridging the Digital Divide.

I am therefore pleased to inform you that the Kenyan Government is currently undertaking various initiatives in the development of the ICT sector which I must acknowledge is bearing fruit. Such initiatives include launching of digital villages to take ICT to the rural areas in order to promote services like e-banking, e-learning, e-procurement, e-health amongst others.

Other initiatives include establishment of Business Process Outsourcing (BPOs), improved connectivity, reduced cost of telecommunication services as well as enhanced service delivery amongst others.

Indeed the Kenyan Government has continued to play an important role in building a people centered information society through joint efforts among all stakeholders in the public and private sector. We have largely facilitated the marketing of locally assembled ICT products to help in the establishment of respective rural ICT enterprises.

Furthermore the Government is coordinating a number of initiatives in full recognition of the role information knowledge and technology is

playing in facilitating rapid Economic growth, wealth creation and improving Kenya's competitiveness globally.

You are all aware that the ICT industry is one of the fastest growing sectors of the respective Economies. It is in this regard that the Government has given priority to infrastructural development, notably the East African Marine System (TEAMS) and the EASSY projects.

I am glad to note that this year's session will also explore web solutions for the youth. The youth, who are our future leaders, constitute 70 percent of many African countries, including Kenya. We should recognize the fact that we need to come up with innovative solutions on how they will benefit from the internet.

As much as we acknowledge the fact that Information is the seed for an idea and only grows when it is watered, we should also realize that unless it is organized, processed and available to the right people in a format for decision making, then it becomes a burden, not a benefit. We should thus bear in mind the pros and cons of the content accessed by the youth through the internet. The information should be of benefit to them and not otherwise.

The Kenyan government is keen to see young people flourish and has taken bold steps to actualize this. In support of this, The Ministry of information and Communications is working closely with the ministry of Youth Affairs to support the youth. For instance, through the BPO operations in Kenya, there has been a significant impact on employment for our young people. The establishment of call centers has seen many of these young boys and girls benefit from the Information Technology field.

I am made to understand that there will be a special tour to show the delegates how the internet is being used to help young people and others in Nairobi's biggest slum, Kibera. I believe that this tour to the CISCO Regional Academy which develops our young people's capacity through training and offering them in depth internet skills essential in global economy, will stimulate our ambitions further as we embark on

Challenge
- Content

internet solutions for our youth.

Finally, it will be the pride of Kenya and the rest of the developing world to have affordable and speedy access to the internet regardless of the Geographical locations. I know that we are all looking forward to that era and I believe that is the major reason as to why we are all gathered here to make this dream a reality.

I wish to thank the organizers of this conference. It is tremendously important that we understand the role of ICT and the power of internet use in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

I once again welcome those of you visiting Kenya for their first time, enjoy your stay.

Thank You All and God Bless.