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**Broadening and Enhancing the Capacity of Developing Countries to Effectively Participate in the Global ICT Policy Fora and the ICT for Development (ICT4Dev) Process**

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A Concept Paper

by

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**A Markle Foundation Project**

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## Introduction

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The digital divide and its impact on the socio-economic developmental outcomes of developing countries has in the last couple of years been a key development agenda at major international fora. It could be argued that, the problem of the digital divide is not just a technological one; in fact it is not merely an issue of a divide between ‘technological-haves’ and the ‘technological-have-nots’. The view is that the threat posed by the digital divide to developing countries is more of an economic development problem than a technological one. The deployment, exploitation and the development of information and communications technologies (ICTs) to support the process of transforming these countries and move them towards information and knowledge economy is the central question which needs to be address within the context of the digital divide. Related to this is the question of how best to broaden and enhance the effective participation of these countries in the global ICT policy as part of the efforts to assist their respective ICT for development process at the national level.

The UN ICT Task Force set up the UN Secretary General and the Digital Opportunity Task Force (DOT Force), created by the G8 Heads of State at their Kyushu-Okinawa Summit in July 2000 among other similar international fora and initiatives address the question of bridging the digital divide and the issue of how to increase the involvement of developing countries in the global ICT policy and decision fora. As part of its objective, the UN-ICT Task Force is to provide overall leadership to the United Nations role in helping to formulate strategies for the development of ICTs and putting those technologies at the service of development. According to the DOT Force report: ‘the digital divide is threatening to exacerbate the existing social and economic inequalities between countries and communities, so the potential costs of inaction are greater than ever before’.

A key objective of the DOT Force is to enhance global understanding of the challenges and opportunities posed by ICTs for sustainable development, and to mobilize resources and coordinate efforts to bridge the global digital divide. Both the DOT Force and the UN-ICT Task Force identified a number of key priority areas of action and one of this is: *to establish and support universal participation in addressing new international policy and technical issues raised by the internet and ICTs.*

The Markle Foundation who is a member of both the DOT Force and the UN-ICT Task Force also identified the implementation of the above action point as a key programme area within the context of its Digital Opportunity Project aimed at the implementation of their policy initiative to assist developing countries to participate fully and share in the benefits of the networked economy and society. The purpose of this concept paper, commissioned by Markle Foundation is to initiate and contribute to the on-going discussion on how best to facilitate the process of universal participation of developing countries within the global ICT policy and decision making fora.

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### **1.0 Universal Participation of Developing Countries in the Global ICT Policy and Decision Making Fora: Making the Case and Establishing the Need**

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The world economy is no doubt experiencing the effects of rapid globalization and liberalization as well as the impact of the emerging information age. The prediction is that this information age will bring about a new global economic order to be dominated by information and knowledge-based economies. According to [Dzidonu; 2001], developing countries are facing new challenges to their socio-economic development process as a result of this globalization process and the impact of the emerging new information age characterized by ICTs and the spread of knowledge.

It could be argued that: the deployment and exploitation of these technologies to support the socio-economic development process is no doubt becoming a key development agenda at major global and regional meetings and fora. The convergence of information technologies, communication, transmission and multimedia presentation technologies is rapidly having a major social, economic and political impact in both the developing and developed world. Parallel to this development is the emergence of the importance of issues relating to global ICT policy and decision making that is shaping the development and applications of these technologies and related systems globally.

We are of the view that: the impact of globalization and the emerging information age is giving rise to a situation where key policy decisions made at various global fora are having implications locally and by so doing influencing the nature and the scope of national policy options to facilitate socio-development efforts and initiatives. Developing countries including those in Africa, who no doubt need to take these global policy decisions into account in developing their own national and regional agenda for action often raise the issue of their limited influence and power of negotiation in these global policy decision making settings --- this situation often presents an obstacle to their developmental efforts.

According to [Dzidonu, Ó Siochrú, and Faye; 2000], some of the key decisions in the areas of ICTs policies that do have impact on the developing countries including African countries are often taken in distant capitals and in global institutions. This although is not a new phenomenon, the effect of globalization and the increasing complexity of the subject matter and the decision making process of some of these institutions and policy fora is amplifying the significance and the implications of this fact. In fact, according to [Cees; 2001], increasingly, decisions taken on global policy issues is influencing the effectiveness of action at the local level, ---- the chances of success of local policy actions will be affected by such global policies as WTO decisions on trade in services or on intellectual property rights, similarly, national telecommunications policy is influenced more by decisions taken in global bodies like the ITU and the WTO than by purely national debates.

There is no doubt that on the global level, key policy decisions are being made at various global and international fora, meetings and at global institutions that directly or indirectly have implications on the development, deployment and the exploitation of ICTs in a number of developing countries including those in Africa. Some of these global policy decisions are also having some impact on and shaping the direction and the nature of national ICT for Development (ICTfDev) policies and programmes in these countries.

For example, decisions made at ICANN meetings as a global Internet policy forum are having impact on and shaping national policies on how the resources of the Internet are to be utilized, distributed and owned by various national stakeholders. Decisions in relation to for example, frequency allocation and management and those relating to the setting of international telecommunications standards made at ITU fora are no doubt being taken into account when national decisions and policies are being made in these areas. Taking another example, global policy decisions made at WTO meetings in the area of trade liberalization in the telecommunication sector to facilitate trade and competition do have some impact on national policies in areas like the liberalization of the sector and the privatization of national communication resources, facilities and assets.

There is therefore no doubt that decisions and policies made at global ICT policy and decision making fora do have some impact on national ICTfDev policy making and implementation situations in a number of countries including those of Africa. However despite this, it could be argued that developing countries, most of whom are latecomers to the ICTfDev process are the least represented (proportionally) at these global policy and decision making fora and meetings. These countries do face a number of challenges and barriers to participation in the global fora; the key ones being: financial bottlenecks, lack of the

necessary expertise to meaningfully participate and contribute in these fora; and lack of access to timely information on the nature and the occurrence of these global events. Also in some cases the internal structures and institutional arrangements of some of these global institutions and policy making fora do work against the effective participation of developing countries.

A number of these countries including African countries are currently in the process of developing and implementing their ICTfDev policies and plans. And it could be argued that their limited participation to-date in some of these important policy and decision making fora is an obstacle to their policy development and implementation process. This lack of effective participation also place these countries in a position that compromises and undermine their negotiation position when it comes to negotiating for terms within the implementation of these global policy decisions whose outcomes have some implications on the implementation of their national policies and programmes. We therefore argue that: the universal participation of developing countries in these global ICT policy decision making fora is therefore imperative.

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## 2.0 Exploring Some Conceptual Issues of Universal Participation

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We examine below some of the key conceptual issues relating to the question of how to facilitate the process of broadening and enhancing the universal participation of developing countries in the global ICT policy and decision making fora. We begin with exploring the concept of *universal participation*.

### 2.1 Examining the Concept of Universal Participation

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The concept of universal participation is a difficult concept to define. For our purpose we offer a working definition that is based on the premise that: the term *participation* is not the same thing as *attendance* at a given event. In other words, the notion of participation goes beyond the mere attendance at an event. We are also of the view that it will be more appropriate to look at the concept of universal participation in terms of *representational universal participation (RUP)* and identify the *participating entities* as: individuals, organizations, countries, a sub-region or a region (e.g. a continent).

Based on these preliminary observations, we can state that: universal participation based on the notion of *representational universal participation* can be achieved in situation where: *a substantial number of the qualified participating entities who are willing and available to participate in the event and likely to be affected by the outcome of the event and/or benefit from the event are fairly represented at the event.*

This concept of RUP can be extended to that of *fairly representational universal participation* which will require that: to ensure a fair representation of a given subset of the participating entities it is necessary that they should account for a given proportion of the total participants or potential participants. For example one could state that to ensure a fair representational universal participation of Africans (as individuals) in the forthcoming INET 2002 Meeting in Washington DC, it is necessary to ensure that they account for about 15% of the total participants.

We could in fact, extend the concept of universal participation further, to that of: *proportional representational universal participation* which takes into account the notion of fairness in representation. Taking an illustrative example, let us take case of the next WTO meeting as a possible global policy forum of interest to its African and other member states of say 150 (as the participating entities) and let's assume that potentially about 90 of the member states will be attending. Assuming that 25% of the member states of the WTO are African countries, then we could state that: to ensure a proportional representational universal participation of African states in the next WTO meeting it is necessary that

close to 23 ( i.e. 25% of 90) African countries should participate in the meeting. In other words if 25% of the eventual participants of the event are African countries we could conclude that the universal participation from the perspective of African countries has been achieved.

From the above analysis, we could conclude that the question of how to facilitate the universal participation of developing countries in the relevant global ICT policy and decision making fora boils down to addressing the question of how to ensure the *proportional representational universal participation* of these countries in the various global fora.

## 2.2 Identifying the Key Global ICT Policy Issues, Stakeholders and Players

A number of specific global ICT policy issues can be identified as of particular relevance to developing countries including those of Africa. According, [Dzidonu, Ó Siochrú, and Faye; 2000] some of the key ones include issues relating to: (i) WTO negotiations and agreements; for example, those relating telecommunication services and universal service; (ii) accounting rate regimes; (iii) intellectual property rights, (iv) the participation of developing countries in Internet Governance and the ICANN process; and (v) issues relating ITU standards and international telecommunications regulatory policies and so on.

We can also identify some of the key stakeholders and players in the global ICT policy area as: ICANN, World Trade Organization (WTO), Internet Society (ISOC), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), United Nations General Assembly (UN-GA), Africa Development Forum (ADF), Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP), World Economic Forum (WEF) and others like the UN-ICT Task Force (UN-ICT-TF) and the Digital Opportunity Task Force (DOT Force).

These stakeholders on different occasions and in various capacities do serve as avenues for policy deliberation and decision making within the global ICT policy fora. We identify below for each of these, their core ICT policy issues and the candidate participating entities as defined above.

<i>Global ICT Fora</i>	<b>Participation Entities</b>	<b>Relevant Global ICT Policy Issues</b>
<b>ICANN</b>	Individuals, Orgs, Governments	DNS Policies, Technical Standards and Issues
<b>WTO</b>	Member States	Trade Policies and Agreements (e.g. TRIPS)
<b>ISOC</b>	Individuals, Orgs	Internet Standards, Policies & Governance
<b>ITU</b>	Member States & Organizations	Telecom Regulatory, Policies, Standards & Agreements
<b>WIPO</b>	Member States & Organizations	Intellectual Property Rights Issues,
<b>UNCTAD</b>	Member States & Organizations	Trade Policies, Agreements and Trade Negotiations
<b>WSIS</b>	Individuals, Orgs, Governments	Gen. ICT & Info. Society, Digital Divide Bridging Issues
<b>UN-GA</b>	Member States	Gen. ICT & Info. Society, Digital Divide Bridging Issues
<b>ADF</b>	Individuals, Orgs, Governments	Gen. ICT & Info. Society, Digital Divide Bridging Issues
<b>GKP</b>	Individuals & Organizations	Gen. ICT & Info. Society, Digital Divide Bridging Issues
<b>WEF</b>	Individuals, Orgs, Governments	Gen. ICT & Info. Society, Digital Divide Bridging Issues
<b>UN-ICT TF</b>	Individuals, Orgs, Governments	Gen. ICT & Info. Society, Digital Divide Bridging Issues
<b>DOT Force</b>	Individuals, Orgs, Governments	Gen. ICT & Info. Society, Digital Divide Bridging Issues

### 2.3 Exploring the Barriers to Participation in the Global ICT Policy and Decision Making Fora

It could be argued that developing countries including African countries are facing a number of challenges that inhibits their effective participation and influence in the global policy and decision making fora. We can identify some of these challenges to include:

- ?? The limited bargaining power and leverage of developing countries as compared to other countries and regional blocs;
- ?? The absence of coherent, consistent position by developing countries on major global issues, that do not just react to events but anticipate issues well in advance of their explicit emergence;
- ?? The lack of experience and capacity in the global ICT policy area, and the 'brain-drain' of many of the most qualified;
- ?? The absence of effective cooperation amongst developing countries on how to engage in collective negotiation on global policy issues for their mutual benefit and
- ?? The effect of some of the extra-regional block alliances that for example some Africa countries enter into --- which in some cases makes it difficult for African countries to act as a group to present a common front on issues at global fora;

Specifically on the issue of barriers to participation in the global ICT policy and decision making fora and process, developing countries do experience a number of barriers to participation. Taking for example the case of ICANN, its current structure and mode of operation presents some technical and financial barriers to effective participation by developing countries in the activities and the decision making mechanisms of its constituencies especially the technical ones. For example, very few African countries do have people with the necessary or requisite technical know-how and expertise to effectively participate in ICANN's technical SOs (supporting organizations) like the: Address Supporting Organization (ASO), Protocol Supporting Organization (PSO), Domain Name Supporting Organization (DNSO), the Government Advisory Committee (GAC) etc. Even the few that could surmount the technical barriers to participation, not many of them are likely to have the necessary financial resources to attend ICANN meetings on a regular basis..

On the whole we can identified the following key barriers to effective participation of developing countries including African countries in the global ICT policy and decision making fora.

- ?? **Technical Barriers:** This relates to the lack of the necessary know-how, or expertise to: (i) effectively participate in relevant global fora; (ii) comprehend the details of the deliberations and the proceedings of the event; (iii) effectively contribute to the discussions of the fora and (iv) learn/benefit from the proceedings of fora.
- ?? **Informational Barriers:** This relates to the inability to acquire or have access to the necessary timely event-related information like: What the event (the meeting) is all about?, Who are the organizers?; When and where it will take place?; How much will it cost to attend?, Who to approach for funding to participate?. How relevant is the fora subject matter and so on
- ?? **Financial Barriers:** This relates the lack of the necessary financial resources to meet the cost of: (i) acquiring the necessary event-related information, (ii) the pre-event preparation (visas, vaccinations, correspondences and communications etc), (iii) attending the event (air travel, insurance etc) and (iv) meeting other incidental expenses during the event (accommodation, transport, food, etc)

?? **Institutional Barriers:** A number of institutional barriers to effective participation in international fora can be identified. The first relates those barriers posed by the very structure, nature and/or the mode of operations of the fora that could serve as a barrier to effective participation of some of participating entities. Other institutional barriers to effective participation could arise as a result of absence of effective cooperation amongst developing countries ( or a group of them) on how to engage in collective negotiation for their mutual benefit. Also taking the case of Africa, extra-African alliances that inhibit Africa’s capacity to present a common front, stand or position on issues can be classified as a type of institutional barrier to effective participation.

Other institutional barriers to participation relates to those arising from the selection structures, mechanisms and procedures for determining who should attend a particular meeting – which sometimes results in nominating un-qualified people to attend these meetings. These institutional barriers in some cases leads to situations where the wrong people are send to some of these meetings; for example, heads of institutions because of corrupt practices, either self-select themselves or their favoured staff to attend international meetings, although they are not the best qualified within the institution to effectively participate in the these meetings.

On the whole, each of the global fora have varying levels of barriers to participation. For example, the technical nature of some of the WTO meetings means that such meetings have a high technical barrier to participation. Also since the majority of the global meetings take place outside Africa (for example), most of the meetings do present a financial barrier to participation for Africans and participants from other developing countries. The Table below presents an evaluation of each of the identified four barriers to participation as they relates to each of the global fora we identified earlier.

**Levels of Barriers to Africa Universal Participation**

<b>Fora</b>	<b>Technical Barriers</b> [Know-how/ Expertise Requirement]	<b>Informational Barriers</b> [Timely Event- Related Information: When, Where, Why and Relevance]	<b>Financial Barriers</b> [Meeting Cost of: Event-information, pre- event preparation, attendance & participation in the Event]	<b>Institutional Barriers</b> [Structure, nature and/or the mode of operations of Forum/Institution; corrupt practices in selection processes etc]
<b>ICANN</b>	High	Medium-to-High	High	High
<b>WTO</b>	High	Medium-to-High	High	High
<b>ISOC</b>	Medium-to-High	Medium-to-High	High	Low-to-Medium
<b>ITU</b>	High	Medium-to-High	High	Medium-to-High
<b>WIPO</b>	Medium-to-High	Medium-to-High	High	Medium-to-High
<b>UNCTAD</b>	Medium	Medium-to-High	High	Medium
<b>WSIS</b>	Low	Medium-to-High	High	Low
<b>UN-GA</b>	Low	High	High	Low
<b>ADF</b>	Low-to-Medium	Low-to-Medium	Medium-to-High	Low
<b>GKP</b>	Low-to-Medium	Low-to-Medium	Medium-to-High	Low
<b>WEF</b>	Low	Medium-to-High	High	Medium-to-High
<b>UN-ICT TF</b>	Low-to-Medium	Medium-to-High	N.A	N.A
<b>DOT Force</b>	Low-to-Medium	Medium-to-High	N.A	N.A

Considering some examples, the technical nature of ICANN meetings for example, do pose *technical barriers* to effective participation for a number of participants including those from developing countries. Most people need to attend a number of ICANN meetings before being able to comprehend the technical details of the meetings and effectively participate in the deliberations. Given that ICANN meetings rotate from continent to continent most potential participants from developing countries are often not able to surmount the financial barrier to regularly attend these meetings. Also the technical nature of some of the other global fora like the ITU and the WTO raises questions of fairness of the decisions reached at these meetings. For example developing countries often do make the point that because of the lack of the necessary expertise from their countries to effectively participate in the proceedings of some of these fora this compromises their position and as a result the outcome of some of these meetings are not in their favour.

Considering the case of *informational barriers*, to effective participation, it is often the case that some potential participants from developing countries do not get to know about some of these global policy events in time to enable them prepare to attend them, some get to know about them long after the event. For example, not many people are aware that the ITU is going to host the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva in December 2003 and a subsequent one in Tunisia in 2005 and that the Africa preparatory meeting for the 2003 event will be taking place in Bamako in May 2002. Sometimes there is some cost associated with the gathering the necessary information about the event and some potential participants could not afford this and as such this poses a barrier to participation in the event. Also for most potential participants from developing countries, information on funding sources to attend these global meetings is crucial and this is always hard to come by. Most people failed to attend these meetings simply because of financial barriers and lack of information on funding sources

On *institutional barriers* to participation, one can identify a number of occasions that Africa participants and participants from other developing countries complain about the unfair structures and the 'rules of engagement' of some of global meetings like the WTO which undermine their level of effective participation in some of these fora. These they argue effect their negotiating position and as such they end up not getting fair terms and conditions from these negotiations.

## **2.4 Classification of Types and Levels of Participation**

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The examples given above shows that the *nature* and *level* of participation in given fora is determined by the extent to which the various types of the barriers to participation can be surmounted by the participating entities. The following classification of types of possible level of participation can be identified.

### **?? *Full Effective Participation (FEP)***

~~///~~ Participant surmounted all the barriers, attended the event (physically or virtually) and had the necessary technical know-how/expertise and did use it to effectively participate, contribute and learn from the event/meeting without being constrained by the inherent structures and/or the nature of operations/modalities of the event.

### **?? *Partially Effective Participation (PEP)***

~~///~~ Participant surmounted all the barriers, attended the event (physically or virtually) and had the necessary technical know-how/expertise and able to use it to effectively participate,



contribute and learn from the event/meeting but for one reason or another only partially participated, contributed and/or learn from the proceedings of the event although was not constraint by the inherent structures and/or the nature of operations/modalities of the event.

~~///~~ Participant surmounted the technical, financial, informational barriers to participation, attended the event (physically or virtually) and had the necessary technical know-how/expertise and was able to use it to effectively participate, contribute and learn from the event/meeting but was only able to partially participate, contribute and/or learn from the proceedings of the event because was constraint by the inherent structures and/or the nature of operations/modalities of the event.

### ?? ***Non-Effective Participation (NEP)***

~~///~~ Participant attended the event (physically or virtually) but was constrained by technical barriers to participation resulting in non-effective (in-effective) participation in the procedures of the event and as such did not contribute and/or learn form the event.

~~///~~ Participant attended the event (physically or virtually) but was constrained by institutional barriers to participation resulting in non-effective participation in the procedures of the event and as such did not contribute and/or learn form the event.

~~///~~ Participant attended the event (physically or virtually) but was constrained by technical and institutional barriers to participation resulting in non-effective participation in the procedures of the event and as such did not contribute and/or learn form the event.

### ?? ***Present-But-No-Participation (PNP)***

~~///~~ Participant surmounted all barriers, attended the event (physically or virtually) and had the necessary technical know-how/expertise to participate but did not participate, contribute or learn from the event/meeting although was not constrained by the inherent structures and/or the nature of operations/modalities of the event. Examples (i) participant travel to the event but got engage in other non-event activities (e.g. shopping) and as a result did not participate (ii) participant was at the event (physically or virtually) but idle around and as such did not participate or contribute to and/or learn from the proceedings of the event

### ?? ***Could-Participate- but-Cannot Attend (CCA)***

~~///~~ Potential participant surmounted the technical, informational and institutional barriers to participation but could not attend the event (physically or virtually) because constrained by financial barriers to participation

~~///~~ Potential participant surmounted the technical, informational and financial barriers to participation but could not attend to event (physically or virtually) because constrained by institutional barriers to participation

~~///~~ Potential participant surmounted the technical, and informational barriers to participation but could not attend to event (physically or virtually) because constrained by both financial and institutional barriers to participation

## ?? *Could-not-Attend-Cannot Participate (CCP)*

~~??~~ Participant was able unable to surmount all the four barriers of participation and as a result could attend the event and hence cannot participate

## **2.5 Classification of Impact of Participation: Applying the FootPrint™ Concept<sup>1</sup>**

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Apart from analyzing the nature and level of participation for a given situation as done above, it will be necessary to investigate the *footprints* (or the impacts) made by virtue of effective participation in the event. The argument being put forward is that participants in a given fora should be able to effectively participate in the event and by so doing gain from their participation. Possible gains include: making an impact during the event (e.g. made a contribution to the proceedings, negotiate an agreement), learn or acquire knowledge, information and/or experience from participating in the event and use what gained for either personal advancement or to directly or indirectly benefit his/or institution, nation, region or continent.

Applying the FootPrint™ concept pioneered by INIIT we can analyze the various levels of impact that could result from participating in a given global fora. According to [Dzidonu and Quaynor; 2002], the FootPrint™ concept is based on the premise that *interventions* into social, economic or political systems are carried out with the intention to bring about a desired change --- *making a footprint* of one sort or another. For example, participation in say global policy fora is intended to bring about some impact --- making some footprints. According to [Quaynor and Dzidonu; 2002], the footprint of a given intervention could among other things be described in terms of the *width* (breadth) of the footprint, the *length* of the footprint, the *depth* and possibly the *time-span/longevity* of the footprint. Applying this to the footprint made as a result of effective participation in a global policy fora; we can examine its *width* (e.g. the scope of the impact or how widespread is the impact within say the organization), its *depth* (how deep is the impact on the organization's activities, operations or service delivery and its *longevity* (e.g. how long will the impact on the individual/organization/nation or region last).

Regarding the participation in a given fora as a kind of intervention to bring about an impact (e.g. contribute to the meeting, learn from the meeting, negotiate a deal for your country or Africa etc) it will be possible to measure the footprint made by the participating entity --- as a measure of the impact of participating in the event. The footprint can be analyzed at the level of the various participating entities identified in section 2.1 and these are: the individual, organizational, national, sub-region/regional (continental) level footprints. We describe below these possible types of footprints in addition to what we termed the *combined level footprint* and the *no-footprint* type of participation.

***Individual Level FootPrint:*** Participant was able to contribute to, learn/or and acquire knowledge, information and/or experience from participation in the event (or fora), and this he/she can use for personal and/or professional advancement without the acquired know-how, information and/or experience directly or indirectly benefiting his/her institution, nation or the continent

***Organizational Level FootPrint:*** Participant was able to contribute to, learn and/or acquire knowledge, information and/or experience from participating in the event (or fora) and this he/she can use to directly or indirectly benefit his/or institution or organization

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Clement Dzidonu and Dr. Nii Narku Quaynor both Senior Research Fellows of INIIT are co-originaors of the FootPrint™ concept.

**National Level FootPrint:** Participant was able to contribute to, learn and/or acquire knowledge, information and/or experience from participating in the event (or fora) and this he/she can use to directly or indirectly benefit his/or country

**Continental Level FootPrint:** Participant was able to contribute to, learn and/or acquire knowledge, information and/or experience that can be used to directly or indirectly benefit his/her region/continent

**Combined Level FootPrint:** Any combination for the above. For example, participant was able to contribute to, learn/or and/or acquire knowledge, information and/or experience that he/she can use for personal and/or professional advancement as well as benefiting his/or institution, and/or nation and/or continent

**No-FootPrint Participation:** Participant was able to learn and/or acquire knowledge, information and/or experience but cannot, did not or was unable to use it for either personal and/or professional advancement or for benefiting his/or institution, nation or the continent

The assumption in all the above scenario is that the participating entity surmounted all the four barriers to participation and was able to effectively participate in the event. The question being address is whether or not he/she was able to make some footprints or capable of making some footprints at some level as a result of the participation in the event. The view is that in the final analysis, participation in global fora should lead to some results – making some footprints at either the individual, organizational, national or at the continental level. An example of a continental level footprint could be the measure of the level of impact that a participant from an African country to an ICANN meeting can make in advancing the development of AfriNIC – The Africa Registry or advancing the work of the African ICANN Group --- set up to coordinate, promote and advance ICANN related issues in Africa

A number of possible applications of the above classification of types of *footprint* can be identified. For example, decision on who to nominate for sponsorship to participate in a given fora in situations of limited sponsorship resources can be determined not only by the candidate’s ability to participant (e.g. surmounting the technical and institutional barriers given that the financial and informational barriers can be surmounted) but also on how the candidate will rate on the potential ‘*footprint of participation scale*’. For example, a decision could be made to give priority to candidates who are likely to make combine level footprints over those likely to make only personal level footprints.

## **2.6 Cross-Classification of Participation-FootPrint of Participation**

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As pointed out above, the footprint analysis is based on the premise that the participating entity effectively participated in the event and based on our earlier classification of types of possible level of participation (in section 2.4), the relevant types effective participation are: *full effective participation* (FEP); and *partially effective participation* (PEP). We present below a description of possible situations linking the concept of *effective participation* with that of the level of *footprint of participation*.

	<b>Full Effective Participation (FEP)</b>	<b>Partially Effective Participation (PEP)</b>
<b>FootPrint: Individual Level</b>	Participant who fully and effectively participated in the fora and used what he/she gained from participation in the fora for personal and/or professional	Participant who although partially participated, contributed and/or learn from the proceedings of the event managed to use what he/she gained for personal and/or professional

	advancement	advancement
<b>Footprint: Organizational Level</b>	Participant who fully and effectively participated in the fora and used what he/she gained for the benefit or advancement of his/or institution	Participant who fully and effectively participated in the fora and used what he gained for the benefit or advancement of his/or institution
<b>FootPrint: National Level</b>	Participant fully and effectively participated in the fora and used what he/she gained for the benefit or the advancement his/her country	Participant although only partially participated, contributed and/or learn from the proceedings of the event managed to use what he gained for his/or country
<b>FootPrint: Continental Level</b>	Participant who fully and effectively participated in the fora and used what he/she gained to benefit the continent ---Africa	Participant although only partially participated, contributed and/or learn from the proceedings of the event managed to use what he gained for the benefit of the continent --- Africa
<b>Combined Level FootPrint</b>	Participant who fully and effectively participated in the fora and used what he/she gained for personal and/or professional advancement or to benefit his/or institution, nation or the continent	Participant although only partially participated, contributed and/or learn from the proceedings of the event managed to use what he gained for personal and/or professional advancement or to benefit his/or institution, nation or the continent
<b>No-FootPrint Participation</b>	Participant who although fully and effectively participated in the fora failed to use what he gained for either his/her personal and/or professional advancement or to benefit his/or institution, nation or the continent	Participant who partially participated, contributed and/or learn from the proceedings of the event fora failed to use what he/she gained for personal and/or professional advancement or to benefit his/or institution, nation or the continent

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### **3.0 Facilitating the Universal Participation of Developing Countries in the Global ICT For a: The Case of African Countries**

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#### **3.1 Reviewing the level of Africa's past Participation in the Global Fora**

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The Table below provides a review of the level of Africa's past participation in some of those global ICT policy and decision making fora, and meetings of relevance to developing nations. For most of these, except the ADF which is purely an annual African international event which takes place in Ethiopia, Africa's level of participation has not been encouraging. In most of these cases, the reasons for Africa's under-representation at most these global fora can be link to Africa's inability to surmount a number of the key barriers to entry identified in this paper.

	<b>Regularity of Meetings/Events</b>	<b>Forthcoming Meetings (When &amp; Where)</b>	<b>Area and Subject of Focus</b>	<b>Target Participants</b>	<b>Past Level of Participation from Africa</b>
	Regular/Quarterly Event + Regular	Future ICANN	DNS, Technical	Individuals, Orgs, Govts	

<b>ICANN</b>	Technical/Policy Work Group Meetings	Meetings	Issues Policy, Standards		Low
<b>WTO</b>	Regular/Annual Event + Regular Technical/Policy Work Group Meetings	Future WTO Meetings	Trade Policies (e.g. TRIPS)	Member States	Low-to-Medium
<b>ISOC</b>	Regular/Annual Event + Regular Technical/Policy Work Group Meetings	INET 2002, Washington DC	Internet Policy and Standards,	Individuals, Orgs	Low-to-Medium
<b>ITU</b>	Regular/Annual Event + Regular Technical/Policy Work Group Meetings	Telecom Asia	Regulatory, Telecom Standards	Member States & Organizations	Low-to-Medium
<b>WIPO</b>	Regular Event + Regular Technical/Policy Work Group Meetings & Training Workshops + Briefings	Future WIPO Meetings	IPR Issues,	Member States & Organizations	Low-to-Medium
<b>UNCTAD</b>	Regular & Annually	Future UNCTAD Meetings	Trade Policy & Negotiations	Member States & Organizations	Low-to-Medium
<b>WSIS</b>	2-Phase Meeting: Geneva (2002) Tunisia (2002) + Regional Prep. Meetings	2003, Geneva 2005, Tunisia  Africa Prep Meeting, May 2002, Bamako	Gen. ICT & Info Society, Digital Divide Bridging Issues	Individuals, Orgs, Govts	N.A
<b>UN-GA</b>	Regular & Annually	Future UN-GAs	Gen. ICT & Info Society, Digital Divide Bridging Issues	Member States	Medium-to-High
<b>ADF</b>	Annual Event	Future ADFs	Gen. ICT & Info Society, Digital Divide Bridging Issues	Individuals, Orgs, Govts	High
<b>GKP</b>	Annually	4-6 April 2002, Addis Ababa	Gen. ICT & Info Society, Digital Divide Bridging Issues	Individuals, Orgs	Low-to-Medium
<b>WEF</b>	Annual Event	Regular-Annual	Gen. ICT & Info Society, Digital Divide Bridging	Individuals, Orgs, Govts	Low

			Issues		
<b>UN-ICT TF</b>	N.A	N.A	Gen. ICT & Info Society, Digital Divide Bridging Issues	Individuals, Orgs, Govts	Low-to-Medium
<b>DOT Force</b>	N.A	May, 2002 Canada	Gen. ICT & Info Society, Digital Divide Bridging Issues	Individuals, Orgs, Govts	Low-to-Medium

Judging from the details in the table above, the case for assisting African countries to surmount the identified barriers to effective participation in the global fora cannot be made stronger. We examine in the next section the broader issues of how to promote and enhance the participation of developing countries in these global ICT policy and decision making fora.

### 3.2 On Promoting and Enhancing the Participation of Developing Countries in the Global ICT Fora and Decision Making Process

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There is no doubt that the effective participation of developing countries in the global ICT policy and decision making fora is essential for supporting and enhancing their efforts to bridge the digital divide through the implementation of appropriate ICTfDev programmes and initiatives. In fact according [Cees; 2001] policy making in the ICT field can no longer be a strictly national affair. --- It is fundamentally affected by global forces.--- And since the globalization process is today largely driven by Northern business interests, acting with the support of their governments, it is especially important for developing countries to develop coherent policy proposals and to make their voices heard at the international level. According to (Khor; 1995) "Without policy co-ordination, developing countries will stand to lose out in the formulation of international policy frameworks that will have important impact on their national policies"

#### On Leaving Footprints on the ICT Landscape of the Developing Countries

In this paper, we identified two broad key issues which need to be address if the effective participation of developing countries in the global policy fora is to be increased, made effective and have impact on their developmental efforts. The first of these issues relates to addressing the barriers to participation and the second relates to the issue of ensuring the effective participation of developing countries. We argued that enhancing participation of these countries in the global fora means more than facilitating their attendance at these global events. In effect we see participation in terms of yielding results and making meaningful impact (leaving footprints) on developmental efforts of the developing countries in general and on their respective ICT landscapes in particular

Efforts to facilitate and enhance the effective participation of developing countries in the global ICT policy scene can therefore be directed at two levels:

1. Efforts aimed at addressing the four barriers to participation namely: technical, informational, financial and institutional barriers and
2. Efforts aimed at ensuring that the participation of developing countries does have the likelihood to yield results on the ground to facilitate their development in the face of globalization and the emerging information age to be dominated by information and knowledge based economies and societies.

In relation to (1) there is a need to take steps to address all the four types of barriers to participation. Addressing some without the others will not guarantee *effective participation* as defined in this paper. For example, targeting financial barriers to participation like providing funding for attendance at global meetings without addressing issues relating to technical barriers to participation will certainly lead to a situation where participants from developing countries attend these meetings without the capability to meaningfully contribute to and/or learn or benefit from their participation. Also addressing technical barriers without addressing issues relating to other barriers like financial and in some cases institutional barriers, will result in what we described as ‘full non-effective’ participants or ‘present-but-no participation’ participants

In the final analysis, efforts directed at addressing the barriers to participation of developing countries in the global policy fora has to be seen within the context of their likelihood to address the issue of making significant footprints both domestically and externally.

## ?? On the Issue of Shared Responsibilities

We are of the view that efforts directed at tackling the barriers to the effective participation of developing countries in the global ICT policy and decision making fora should be a shared one. Although external funding agencies could assist in addressing some of the barriers like the *financial barriers* to participation and to some extent some aspects of the *technical barriers* by funding technical assistance and training programmes to develop the capacity of developing countries to effectively participate in the global fora, the bulk of the responsibility to address the barriers to entry lies with the developing countries themselves. For example, a lot can be done by individuals and respective countries to address barriers like: informational barriers, and technical barriers, and to some extent the financial and institutional barriers to participation.

Relating to institutional barriers, it will be possible for developing countries to mobilize their collective bargaining and negotiation power and influence to bring about changes in restrictive structures of participation and remove or amend rules of participation that work to the disadvantage of these countries. The problem is that developing countries most often fail to present a common front at these global fora and as a result weakens their negotiation position and their collective bargaining power. Also in relation to tackling informational barriers to participation, there is a lot developing countries and individual prospective participants can do in this areas to overcome this barrier to participation.

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## Conclusions

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As pointed out earlier tackling the barriers to participation in the global ICT policy fora is not an end in itself, but rather a means to facilitating and enhancing the effective participation of developing countries in these fora to support their development efforts to meet challenges of globalization and the emerging information age.

In the final analysis, efforts directed at broadening and enhancing the capacity of developing countries to effectively participate and contribute to the global ICT policy and decision making fora should be judged on the basis of the footprints they made on the development landscape of these countries. The effective participation of these countries in the global ICT policy and decision making fora should: (i) lead to these countries registering their position, making their case, and making meaningful inputs and contributions to the global policy and decision making process and (ii) result in developing countries translating the gains made at these fora into actions on the ground to make meaningful and significant footprints on their national development landscape.



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