Information and Communication Technology Policy in Rwanda

A country ripe for ICT development

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Outline

- Country background

- Climate for ICT development

- Government policies

- Problems encountered

- Outlook

Rwanda

- Small, landlocked country
- Gained independence in 1962
- 90% of people engaged in agriculture
- 64% people in poverty
- Characterized by civil war and genocide
- Devastating effects on the economy

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Climate for Change

- Highest population density in Africa (320 people per km^2)

- Small land area

- 4th highest growth rate in the world

- Arable land all in use, productivity↓

- No modernization

- No natural resources

Highly inefficient and unsustainable!

The New Rwanda

- Only resource is the people

- Switch to ICT driven knowledge-based economy

- Take leadership in Africa as ICT leader

- Use this as foundation for development

- Vision 2020
  - Plan for social and economic development
  - Seeks to attack underlying problems
  - Goal of middle-income country by 2020
    - Poverty 30%
    - GNI per cap from $220 → $900

Government Policy

- Attract foreign aid and investment in ICTs with tax breaks

- NICI Plans

  - 1st Plan (2001-2005): development of economy
  - 2nd Plan (2006-2010): strengthening of economy
  - 3rd Plan (2011-2015): sustain and compete
  - 4th Plan (2016-2020): consolidate and achieve

1st NICI Plan

- Policy: context and reasoning
- Plan: "8 Pillars" and their implementations
- Structure: NITC (thinkers), RITA (implementers)

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Education

- Kigali Institute of Science and Technology
  - Heavily supported by government
  - Opened in 1998 with 259 students
  - Now almost 4,000 students enrolled
  - Offers degrees in Elect., Mech., Civil, Comp., Business Admin. and more
  - Focus on developing ICT skills, development and entrepreneurship
  - Job creators <u>NOT</u> job seekers

Private Sector

- Rwanda Terracom
  - Founded 2004 to wire Rwanda with PON fiber network
  - Connected schools, hospitals, and government facilities in Kigali
  - Aims to connect 5 largest cities by end of 2005
  - In October purchased Rwandatel
  - Phone call to U.S. 92 cents/min →28 cents/min↓
  - Dialup $50-$300 → Fiber or wireless (2MB/s) $125 with television, Internet and phone

Barriers to Success

- No existing ICT infrastructure

- Low literacy rate (48%)

- Shortage of qualified human resources

- 90% of people in rural areas

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Outlook

- EASSy submarine cable completed by 2007

- Committed government

- Enthusiastic people

- Gaining int'l recognition

- True benefits are long term

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QUESTIONS?

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