

Honored Ministers and government guests, colleagues from Africa, and fellow speakers

Dear colleagues

I wish I could be with you in person, but I am with you in my heart.

Today, I speak to you about the importance of Africa's leadership both for Africa, but also for the world, in achieving the SDGs, and maintaining and enhancing the stability of the IGF and ICANN and its importance to the growth of the Internet and world wide web in Africa.

The digital world moves now at a rapid pace. The voices of all who are affected need to be heard. I congratulate AfiCTA as you are bringing the voice from African business not just into ICANN, and the IGF, but also into the United Nations family. This is an amazing contribution and has only happened due to AfiCTA's leadership.

I know that you know these facts, but I recite them, as I hope that others will read this speech, and understand that:

Africa is the world's second largest continent – 20% of the earth's land

It touches 3 oceans – Atlantic, Indian, and Mediterranean Sea.

The longest river in the earth – the Nile begins in African countries, and empties into the Mediterranean Sea.

The largest desert in the world is the Sahara and covers most of north Africa. The highest mountain is Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

Africa's total population is over 1 billion people – United Nations estimates are that Africa will grow to 2.5 billion in 2050 – today, one out of six people in the world, live in Africa.

And today, Africa is the youngest continent in the world.

Why does this matter?

Because Africa has a major role to play in how it adopts technology to address key challenges and to bring its voice into the global events, and ensures that it is being heard today, and tomorrow. How it creates jobs for its youth, and how it can establish and maintain stable governments country by country, so that economic growth can thrive.

Africa is blessed with brilliant thinkers, both from seniors and from young people. Yet, creating enough jobs to meet the demands and interests of young people is a major challenge. The opportunity is here – the application of ICTs – in health care, education, agriculture, energy – all can help to create the new jobs that bring prosperity to Africa, but also create the businesses that can then leapfrog into offering services and products to other parts of the world.

But, to achieve these visions for Africa, it is important that governments do more to engage the information and perspectives from businesses as true partners and collaborators in achieving the changes in policy at a national level, and welcome the advice of business before governmental agencies take positions in international settings.

All the AfICTA members must start with establishing an ongoing advisory exchange with their governmental agencies – by such collaboration, we begin to fulfill the promise of the Information Society for all by working together. I applaud the AfICTA members' engagement with all the countries already engaged, and propose that all of us seek to build further on how we can advance engagement between stakeholders. And I note that some governments must do more to bring in the voices of businesses and NGOs and the technical community, in a regularized consultation. The more we exchange information, the better the public policies that can contribute on a national level, and the better the input on the positions taken in international for a.

I believe that AfICTA has a unique role to play within Africa by hosting a call to action to do 6 things in all AfICTA countries, and invite others to join:

- 1) Collaborate on the importance of updating cyber security and privacy legislation and include the AfICTA association as a key partner
- 2) On a country level, examine your approach to how your Universal Service fund is used, and look for flexible approaches that allow, for instance, the use of USF for pilots that connect villages, schools, and innovation labs that kick start new businesses – be more flexible and do pilots that involve white spaces, and do not limit your country to what the incumbent telecom can do – be bold and examine concepts like “Smart Villages”; pilots in the use of white spaces, ... and more...
- 3) Collaborate to bring multi stakeholder engagement in your national IGF, if you are not already engaged – if you are government, agree to speak; if you are business, step up your engagement and if you are NGO, your voice is also needed...
- 4) As mobile is so important for connectivity, be bold: Seek to create at least a regional roaming agreement on mobiles to dramatically reduce costs to users, and work toward Africa wide roaming plans for mobile – the benefit to users will be quite profound
- 5) Encourage participation of the African governments in 1) UN CSTD meetings 2) engagement with UNCTAD's e-commerce for all initiative 3) make sure that the government is sending a representative to ICANN GAC/and offer to provide briefings from the private sector and 4) ask your government to include private sector and civil society/technical community consultations and include advisors to all UN meetings
- 6) Encourage more of your African businesses to attend ICANN and to join the Business Constituency @ ICANN, where their input is both appreciated, and welcomed.

It is an honor to speak to you today. I wish I was with you in person, but again, I am with you in spirit. And I hope to see many of you at the African IGF in early December. With congratulations on your program, and my commitment to continue to support the successful contribution of AfICTA as a leading voice for business from Africa.

Marilyn Cade