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 km²)
- 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
1\textsuperscript{st} 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 NOT 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

QUESTIONS?