

# African Information Ethics/E-Government Workshop

## Group Discussions

### Group Five : Members

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### Topics for Discussion:

- A. Infrastructure (electricity, bandwidth, mobile phones)
- B. Education and Training (Information literacy and media literacy)

Topic	Sub Topic	Discussion
A	<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	
	Electricity	<p><b>Case studies/country reports:</b> Zambia has hydro generated power which is currently not meeting the needs of the cities thus apply load shedding, while most rural areas are cut off completely despite the enormous reserve capacity; Mozambique, has the Caborra Bassa Dam with immense power generation potential but right now the distribution does not reach all the rural areas; South Africa uses thermal and nuclear power stations but still the output is inadequate for their needs; Malawi has three hydro power stations which do not satisfy the country's needs, to complicate matters one the stations had its turbines entangled with debris thus people and industries are experiencing massive load shedding.</p> <p><b>Alternative:</b> Solar power was tried in Malawi for rural electrification but has proved difficult to maintain and more expensive to introduce on a large scale. Malawi is scouting on importing power from Mozambique while South Africa is eyeing on the hydro power potential of DR Congo. South Africa has also put money aside to improve the Nuclear development in some african countries.</p> <p><b>Inference:</b> Electricity poses the single biggest obstacle to the implementation of e-Government programmes in sub-saharan Africa</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Government should treat the</p>

		improvement of power generation and rural electrification with high importance and utmost urgency
		<b>Ethical Implication:</b> Lack of power seriously impedes development thereby denying the citizenry some of their fundamental rights; in addition, poor socio-economic development impacts negatively on the citizens' life
	Bandwidth	<p><b>Case studies/country reports:</b> Malawi internet connections are slow and also very expensive. Optic fiber cable is distributed between two major cities, therefore there is low internet usage countrywide. Plans are at an advanced stage to have fiber connectivity to the global world by linking with Mozambique /Tanzania fiber installations at the border under sponsorship of the World Bank, and installation of broadband wireless transmitters in the rural areas under the auspices of ITU. Mozambique has the high bandwidth connectivity in the country and along the coast line (Easy cable connection), however not all areas of the country are covered as yet. South Africa has no big problems with bandwidth, whilst Zambia has several complementary efforts on both fiber and wireless connectivity.</p> <p><b>Inference:</b> All the four countries are on track for having adequate bandwidth, however upgrading may not be high on the respective governments' agenda</p>
		<p><b>Recommendation:</b> Governments should prioritize upgrade of bandwidth nationwide for proper utilization of the internet, which is a powerful efficient tool for disseminating important information and delivering vital messages to the communities. It can also be used for offering the citizens an opportunity to interact with their government whilst at their localities.</p> <p>With its highest population, majority of them in rural were there is no fiber, 80 % of the population is not aware of the e-governance and the internet. Projects have to be implemented to educate and motivate the usage of internet because some people don't consider ICT or the internet as important.</p>
		<b>Ethical Issue:</b> Denial of access to ICT infrastructure and services. It is the responsibility of Governments to provide equal access and opportunities to all citizens – urban and rural, rich and poor
	Mobile	<b>Case studies/country reports:</b> Penetration of mobile phone

	Phones	<p>networks and ownership of mobile handsets is quite high in all the four countries (Mw, Moz, SA and Zam). Growth rate is also phenomenal.</p> <p>Mobile phones are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- much cheaper than computers</li> <li>- easier to use</li> <li>- handy, inconveniently portable</li> <li>- most citizens have a greater affinity to own a mobile handset whilst being apprehensive to even just using a computer</li> </ul>
		<b>Inference:</b> Mobile phones are a more convenient ICT gadget than are computers
		<b>Recommendation:</b> Government should seriously consider adapting mobile technology for implementing the e-government programmes in the interim, while waiting to organize technical requirements for full implementation like availing adequate bandwidth and acquiring computers.
		<b>Ethical Issue:</b> Denial of access to services especially to the poor, and in some cases the illiterate
<b>B.</b>	<b>EDUCATION AND TRAINING</b>	
	ICT Literacy	<p><b>Case studies/country reports:</b> The level of ICT literacy especially usage of computers is very low.</p> <p><b>Inference:</b> This means most citizens would be left out once e-Government is implemented because current full scale implementations lean towards utilization of the internet and web-based applications.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> ICT literacy should be forerunner of e-Government implementation in Africa. Use of ICT graduates not yet employed or ICT students on holiday to mount ICT literacy sessions in the community information/computer centres.</p>
		<b>Ethical Issue:</b> "Right to Education" – it is the responsibility of government to make sure its citizens are educated in all aspects of human endeavor. The private sector can complement government efforts since ICT literacy would translate into more customers and clients for ICT products and services
	Information Literacy	<b>Case studies/country reports:</b> There are varying degrees of Information literacy across the four countries. Most awareness campaigns in these multi-party democracies are one-off, in most cases in the pre-election period. Civic education campaigns are also not continuous. No one

		<p>institution has absolute control over content. This is not more of a challenge to the citizens in most countries but the challenge is on ICT's and computer literacy.</p> <p><b>Inference:</b> Need for nationwide information literacy campaign.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Government institution responsible for information / ICT should have a specific programme for information literacy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens should be taught how to use information</li> <li>• Trainings should be in mother tongue</li> <li>• Training of graduates to promote literacy</li> </ul> <p>The private sector also has to help the government to deliver on the issue of internship program.</p> <p><b>Ethical Issue:</b> "Right to Information"; Every citizen has a right to information, lack of information literacy is trampling on that right</p>
	Media Literacy	<p><b>Case studies/country reports:</b> The media is basically classified into public (government-owned) and private (owned by other players not government). In all the countries, media houses have political leanings, thus determine content of their deliverables according to their partisan interests. by producing editions in at least a local language in a locality. All the countries have also community based and religion-based radio stations.</p> <p><b>Inference:</b> The media contribute a lot to democratization process (expression of divergent views to the community), holding of traditional values, promoting religious ideals.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Both the media practitioners and their beneficiaries should be sensitized on their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p><b>Ethical Issue:</b> "Right to Information – Freedom of expression" Freedom of expression is the birthright of all citizens. With media literacy and e-Government in place, citizens would be able to express themselves and their views to Government and other interested groups and persons</p>