

# Preface

This book contains information, data, research, observations, personal interviews, and decades of telecommunications and new media experience of experts working in Africa. It memorializes and brings the current contributions by African university professors and telecommunications enterprises, leading telecommunications and media private sector consultants, and seasoned experts in multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the International Telecommunications Union as well as AT&T and Ericsson, two of the world's major carriers.

The conference that this volume embodies was titled “Next Generation Broadband as a Video Platform—Strategies for Africa” and took place in Lusaka, Zambia, in May of 2012 over a period of two days. The chapters in this volume reflect the topical exchanges that occurred among the experts; members of the Zambian Government, who graciously hosted the Conference; members of the Zambian telecommunications and media sectors; and followers on Webex around the world. The information from the conference has been updated and edited for inclusion in this book, and a few additional articles have been added.

Most of the experts who participated in the Conference agree that, if made reasonably available in most African countries, next-generation broadband, with or without a video platform, would have a shallow learning curve and a fast uptake. However, it is logical to assume that primarily due to the lack of landline infrastructure throughout the continent the next-generation broadband growth in Africa will be based on mobile penetration. Thus, there is a note of sobriety expressed by some of the authors that, while feasible, and even happening in certain countries, it seems likely that next-gen broadband in Africa will be mobile and thereby take longer and require more technology and pricing ingenuity than the more traditional growth patterns experienced by industrialized nations. After all, most industrialized nations had the benefit of starting their next-gen build-out on a landline backbone. The statistics presented in the chapters by Tim Kelly, Drs. Gillwald and de Lanerolle, Professor Hudson, Mr. Akoh, and others in this volume bear out these observations.

Perhaps the most interesting and notable result of the conference, reflecting the millions of work hours dedicated to the topic in their careers and presented papers,

and the resulting chapters herein, is that there are still vast discrepancies in Africa's prognosis for keeping up with, or catching up to, a world of competitive, ever-increasing broadband speeds and access. What that means to a nation's development, where even the definition of broadband itself is not fully agreed upon by the nations in the competition, is hotly debated. The chapters in this book provide different vantage points, perspectives, and experiences leading to varying conclusions of Africa's likely fit in the next-generation broadband world.

The Introduction which follows this Preface puts the relevance of the history of Africa's telecommunications sector in perspective, as a key factor in Africa's next-generation broadband. Judith O'Neill has spent nearly 40 years of her career in telecommunications and new media working, advising, and seeking creative, workable strategies in developing countries, much of the last 25 of which were in and around most of the 54 countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The perspective which she presents is at once legal and regulatory, cultural and pragmatic, and to a lesser degree political.

We hope that this volume fills in some of the holes in your research on African broadband, particularly the prospects for next-generation broadband in Africa and its role as a video platform. It should provide an insight into possibilities and challenges for Africa in this field. We hope that it allows you to put your own background, thoughts, and work into context so that you can better understand Africa's road to broadband ubiquity as a continent and next-generation broadband as a strategy for catching up with the world economy.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge and express our sincere gratitude to those individuals and institutions without whom and which the Conference in Zambia and this resulting volume could not have happened. We thank our core private sector sponsors, AT&T and Liquid Telecoms, for their moral, fiscal, and technological support before, during, and following the conference as well as Airtel and Emerging Markets Communications, EMC, for their substantive and generous contribution to our program. We also thank our gracious and committed hosts, the Government of Zambia and in particular the Ministry of Transport, Works, Supply and Communications and especially the Honorable Minister Yamfwa Mukanga. We thank as well ZICTA and its tireless Director General Margaret Chalwe Mudenda for her enthusiasm, the protocol assistance of ZICTA with visiting dignitaries, and the richness of her vision and presentation on Zambia's telecommunications future. We thank our Zambian coordinators, Shuller Habeenzu and Charles Chilinda, who provided us the insights to ensure that our program ran smoothly in Zambia from start to finish.

Of course neither the conference nor this volume could have existed without the time, energy, and life commitment to their career expertise in all aspects of telecommunications services and next-generation broadband of our speakers, academics, private sector leaders, and multilateral experts.

Last, but certainly not least, we express our gratitude to CITI for its vision and to Jason Buckweitz for a sleepless 52 h in Lusaka to ensure that our program ran technologically smoothly in all aspects; and we applaud and thank Mr. Brahim Sanou, Director of the Development Bureau of the International

Telecommunications Union, for being our keynote speaker and author of the Foreword to this volume, for his sincere and lifelong commitment to the improvement of Africa and its citizens through telecommunications, and for extending the torch of next-generation broadband as a guiding light to Africa.

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Judith O'Neill  
Eli M. Noam  
Darcy Gerbarg

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O'Neill, J.; Noam, E.; Gerbarg, D. (Eds.)

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