

Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion

1 How would you define, or how do you understand the theme « Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion »

Upon reading the theme, it immediately comes to mind the fact that, on earth, there still exist a great number of people who are not in contact with the internet, therefore, these people, though living in the 21st century like us all, cannot even dream of benefiting from the advantages which come along with the internet.

2 When adopting these policy options at local levels, government authorities should take into consideration the people's culture.

3 Are you aware of any specificities around connectivity at a local or regional level ?

Here in Cameroon, the northern provinces [mostly muslim] there is a standing problem against connectivity in certain localities. This is due to their Culture [what goes on in people's minds, their outlooks and beliefs] With their culture, a striking statistics pops-up here in relation to Religion and the Supernatural.

4 What are some of the barriers or limitations preventing people who do have Internet access from being enabled or empowered through such connectivity?

- (1) Over here, the government's agency in charge of regulating telecommunications, in its French acronym **ART** [Agence de Régulation des Télécommunications] is one that is extremely unreactive. Very little actions are done in order to play its role as the Telecommunications Police in the country. Therefore, giving the leeway to the different telecommunications operators in the country to exaggerate in their ugly practices against subscribers.

(2) The Omnipresence of "False Advertisements"

Like aforesaid, mobile telecommunications operators in Cameroon are excellent in the making of False Advertisements. They announce the existence of services which in reality, they do not have, and by so doing, these fraudulent actions give them opportunities to collect huge sums of money from the unprotected consumers\subscribers that we are.

I insist on this point given that I am a **Civil society Activist** . And many-a-times, it is a civil society member in the country who has to go to the media and alert the populations about the nonexistence of this or that service as claimed by the mobile telecommunication companies.

5 What does meaningful access mean?

For me, meaningful access means no False Adverts. If a company says it provides 4G Internet connection, let the population be able to live the difference between 3G Internet connection and 4G. There is nothing like 3G+ Internet connection.

6 How can connectivity contribute to reaching the new SDGs?

The internet cuts across all the different SDGs. Starting from Goal 1 to Goal 17. Hence, the important thing is first to be connected, then all the world's knowledge contained in the internet will be dispatched to whosoever is interested in learning. No matter their domain of activity.

7 Do you know examples of success stories?

THE CARDIO PAD

A medical device (pad) used by medical practitioners and other specialists to check the state of health of a patient's heart, and this information can be communicated to any medical doctor wherever they may be. So long as they are connected to the internet. This fantastic life-saving machine was created by a Cameroonian inventor – **ARTHUR ZANG**.