

## IGF 2017 Reporting Template

- Session Title: Let the people speak: using evidence from the Global South to reshape our digital future

- Date: 21 December 2017

- Time: 10:40 – 12:10

- Session Organizer: Dr Alison Gillwald

- Chair/Moderator: Dr Alison Gillwald

- Rapporteur/Notetaker: Dr Enrico Calandro

- *List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations:*

Helani Galpaya, LIRNEasia

Aileen Auguero, Instituto Estudios de Peruanos

Daniel Abadie, Digital Government office, Ministry of Modernisation, Argentina

Adil Sulieman ( Information Society Division, African Union Commission)

Anriette Esterhuysen (Association for Progressive Communication)

Torbjorn Fredriksson (UNCTAD Partnership on Measuring the Information Society).

Helen Croxson/substitute (GSMA)

- *Key Issues raised (1 sentence per issue):*

1. The panel was driven by the growing importance of ICT for human development. While it is widely acknowledged that in many instances, digital technologies have boosted growth, expanded opportunities, and improved service delivery, their aggregate impact has fallen short and is unevenly distributed.

2. The recently approved Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) also include ICT access and use into the purview of the new targets. Yet, our understanding of factors influencing digital inclusion and exclusion – in particular those ‘After Access’ is still limited.

3. The challenge is particularly pressing in the Global South which is undergoing rapid social and economic change as a result of the confluence of mobile and broadband technologies. There is mounting evidence that broadband directly contributes to job creation and stimulates economic growth. The improvements in the flows of information and the reduction in transaction costs not only improves the efficiency of business but enhances the well-being of those who are connected to the Internet. But, there is also evidence of an increasing divide not only between those with access to such services and those without access, but between those who are connected with the means and skills to utilise the Internet optimally and those who are not. From a policy perspective this requires extending interventions to address inequality from those focussed purely on supply-side investment and operator-based strategies to those focussing on demand side challenges, still of affordability, but also a range of others enabling or enhancing digital inclusion factors – education, income, gender related, e-skills of various kinds at various levels, content and language, and rights to privacy, to safety and security online, to freedom of expression.

4. While presenting research findings on ICT access and use across 15 countries in the Global South, panellists discussed the importance of conducting nationally representative surveys on ICT access and use across the Global South, to fill an existing research gaps by moving beyond high level descriptive indicators primarily focussed on access (which yet the #AfterAccess research provides) to understanding the social, economic and political factors determining digital inequality, even once people are connected.

*- If there were presentations during the session, please provide a 1-paragraph summary for each presentation:*

During the panel discussion, a comprehensive presentation on a wide set of indicators on ICT access and use across 15 countries in Global South was presented. Specifically, the panellists compared research results across African, Asian, and Latin American countries. Issues such as barriers to ICT access and use, including literacy and skills, and gender disparities, were presented through the lens of social inequality, in the sense that the socioeconomic causes of unequal opportunities of benefitting from ICT access and use were identified and discussed.

As important as understanding the barriers to use, indicators on how those who are online are using the Internet – what is being consumed, how, where and why, were presented as well.

*- Please describe the Discussions that took place during the workshop session (3 paragraphs):*

The following key issues emerged during the discussion:

1. Importance of collecting demand-side statistics on ICT access and use across the entire African continent. Household and individual surveys data can be cross-checked with existing data-sets from other institutions. The panelists elaborated on the importance of complementarity of the nationally representative survey data with other existing datasets on ICT access and use;
2. Indispensability of the demand-side data for evidence-based ICT policy-making. The case of Rwanda was presented as emblematic in that regard, in the sense that during the presentation, the country scored very low on internet penetration, and even lower on social media use, although the country is considered a successful case of technical cooperation for development agencies, and for the donors community, who have invested a considerable amount of funds in Rwanda;
1. Importance of understanding ICT inequalities in terms of socio-economic indicators, such as income, gender, age, levels of education, etc. These indicators are particularly important to design demand-side policy interventions, for instance on ICT and education. Participants expressed the need to know more about the impact of technology on the labour market as data availability is limited. Specifically, there is a need to know levels of availability of e-Skills to measure issues such as emerging jobs and forms of occupation.

*- Please describe any Participant suggestions regarding the way forward/ potential next steps /key takeaways (3 paragraphs):*

The main takeaways of the panel can be summarized as follows:

1. It was recommended to use the nationally representative data also for verification, and to challenge and comment the supply-side data, on which most of the official statistics are based. It

was recommended to bring together some of the critical questions from the nationally representative surveys in national census to obtain comparative high-level indicators across all countries, and to work in close contact with National Statistical Offices and ICT/telecommunications regulators to address issues on digital inequalities.

2. Capturing survey data is expensive, and therefore it was recommended to strengthen bilateral support to include at least some of the questions in the census or labour surveys. It was acknowledged that Member States have recently agreed on collecting data on e-commerce and digital commerce. In that regard, a representative from ITU pointed out that the International organisation would like to play an active role in this area.
3. A representative from UNCTAD emphasized that the Partnership on Measuring the information society has produced thematic indicators on emerging technologies, but policy makers are not aware on these indicators on the transformative and disruptive potential of ICTs. Measurement challenges cannot be separated from the policy challenges, and therefore it is important to produce policy relevant data and statistics on multiple aspects of the digital divide. The #AfterAccess research is really enriching and enlightening in that respect, as it investigates issues on digital divide through the lens of digital inequalities.

## **Gender Reporting**

*- Estimate the overall number of the participants present at the session:*

15

*- Estimate the overall number of women present at the session:*

80%

*- To what extent did the session discuss gender equality and/or women's empowerment?*

Gender equality was discussed to a large extent during the session.

*- If the session addressed issues related to gender equality and/or women's empowerment, please provide a brief summary of the discussion:*

Disaggregated data by gender was presented across all regions and differences in terms on how male and female access and use mobile phones, smartphones, internet, and social media, where presented and discussed by the panelis. In particular, it was indicated that supply-side interventions aiming at bringing women online will eventually increase levels of access to ICT for women, the main issues on gender divide are related to societal inequalities. Survey data reveals that lower levels of income and education across women in the Global South have an impact on levels of access and use of ICT. Therefore, the digital gender divide cannot be bridged unless the underpinning inequality issues are addressed as well.