

# Meeting Africa's digital transformation needs

The internet has radically changed everyday life in the global society. It has created new ways to connect with friends and family, disrupted the way we do business and rewired just about everything in-between, as in the internet of things (IoT).



Image by 123RF

But the internet and the world wide web are still relatively young. [The public web is only 27 years old](#), and like most twenty-something's, it still has a lot of growing up to do, says ICT Solutions provider, Huawei.

Huawei experts spoke on '*The Future of Internet*' at the Africa Internet Governance Forum (AIGF) 2016 held at Durban's ICC earlier this week. The event which is aimed at inclusive development and the digital transformation of Africa, ran from the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> of October 2016.

With the raging debate globally on the future of the internet, there is one thing that can be agreed upon: Africa is still lagging behind the developed world. There are still challenges around basic infrastructure to allow for the internet to flourish on the continent.

"The good news is that Africa has a lot of potential, there is great development in what we call the 'adopters stage' of the Huawei Global Connectivity Index (GCI) that categorises countries from starters, adopters, and front runners," said Huawei ICT expert Dr Bello Musa.

“Many African countries are working in close partnerships and investing greatly in infrastructure development. At Huawei for example, we are amongst the major players in broadband rollout in Africa.”

Policy makers, trade associations, and industry leaders need to objectively benchmark their nations’ GCI performance against their peers and frontrunners to set goals for developing digital economies. Alongside GCI, they must also consider the following elements: policies, institutions and incentives, manpower and skills, and digital ecosystem, urged Musa.

The increasing availability of always-on connectivity and real-time services made possible through affordable ubiquitous broadband is transforming the way we live. Passive input from post processing of data is shifting to proactive and predictive data analytics designed to complement, or even digitally drive our physical lives. What impacts the way we experience each and every day is moving outside of traditional spheres of influence and into new and exciting realms of inspiration.

According to Huawei, the future will deliver expected as well as unexpected innovation that will tightly integrate digital information and services with our lives, impacting not only individuals, but also businesses, governments, societies, and countries.

The next 20 years will see the emergence of a profound synergy between digital and physical worlds, and ICT will bring huge innovations and enable limitless possibilities. For Africa at the moment, broadband is Africa’s number one technology enabler.

Other partners involved in the AIGF are DTPS, Google and ZANDA.

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