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### **ISOC Nigeria 99 Conference**

I would like to thank all of you for your kind invitation to the ISOC Nigeria 99 Conference. I have the honour, to have participated as speaker during the Network Capacity Building Workshop for the Nigeria University System, in Abuja in 1997. So, I was looking forward to repeat the nice experience however due to major circumstances it was not possible this time. My sincere apologies for not attending this conference in port Harcourt today however, as a citizen of the cyber-world, I am virtually, with you. As you gather today to talk about Internet, I want to give my little contribution. I wish to ask all of you to truly answer the following question by the end of this conference:

Is Internet an Essential Tool for Development?

I believe, to become an essential tool for development, the Internet needs

to solve critical shortfalls provide the opportunity to generate wealth and help to expand the economic opportunity in developing countries. However, the fact is that 95% of the world's population and nearly 25% of countries do not have full-fledged connectivity. Decision-makers of undeveloped regions need to address on a priority basis these facts to reduce information technology inequalities between rich and poor countries. Development is not just a matter of food but also means having a stake in the future.

IT applications in sectors in which the Internet must play an essential role need, to be focussed.

- Education: Distance learning in schools, universities and institutions. On-line access to information on health research and technology. Industrialised countries have already created virtual libraries which could be made available to local universities or institutions;
- Medicine: On-line-consultation with international specialists via the net. Internet access offers opportunities to a large group of doctors and researchers to communicate and to access health and nutrition no-line programmes;
- E-commerce: Informal entrepreneurs could access global markets. About 500 million micro-entrepreneurs around the world sell products/services to their immediate communities. However, the scope in developing countries is still very limited due to the lack of adequate channels to foster "trust" in informal producers enabling them to gain access to these markets through the net;
- Communications: E-mail for communications and extensive Web posting for tourism, trade, business, education, etc. Strengthen informational links with national, cross-country, regional and international partners.

#### Internet evolution in Latin America – Peru

I am just back from my home country and I wish to share with you some of my experience. I have been happily surprised with the advances on technology in Peru in the last few years. I believe, there is still lots to do in this respect however today, Internet has become part of the everyday life of a large majority of peruvians ie. Individuals, commercials, governments, universities, hospitals, schools, etc. About 110 ISPs provide Internet access around the nation. ISPs charge mainly flat-rates, between \$5-20 USD/month (depending of line-speed). Some ISPs offer one year/free of charge service and other facilities due to immense competition. ISPs do not only rely financially only of Internet provision fees but of any value-added-services such as: training, consultancy, maintenance, intranets support, web posting, directories, tele-centres (cabines), video-conference, etc.

About 10,000 Internet tele-cabines will be established around the country within the next 2 years. All the main cities have full connected however ISPs, government and telecom operators are introducing tele-cabines in particularly for the rural/isolated areas. The government is gathering the commercial, academic, banking, industrial and other sectors to be involved to find common solutions to expand the use of electronic commerce for national/international transactions. However, telephone lines are still poor quality in certain areas, ISPs provides low-bandwidth access, local telephone rates are still high and PCs/modems are still too expensive for the masses.

#### **Conclusion**

As I participated, on behalf of the ITU, in the conception of national Internet services in some African countries (Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia) and strategic programmes in India and Honduras. I believe, the main barriers to the Internet's expansion in developing nations remain the lack of applications to create sustainability in the net, private investment, competition and a flexible regulatory framework.

## **Recommendation**

I would like to emphasise the importance of a south-to-south co-operation to promote the sharing of information, concerns and solutions to common shortfalls between Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Happy New Year 1999- I will see you in San Jose- USA at INET'99.