Concept Note: Ministerial Forum on Building a Future-Oriented, Intelligent Digital Infrastructure for Africa

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Event: Ministerial Forum on Building a Future-Oriented, Intelligent Digital Infrastructure for Africa

Date: 13th November 2023

Location: Cape Town, South Africa

Organizers: African Telecommunications Union (ATU), Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) of South Africa

Objective:

The objective of the Ministerial Forum is to build a consensus on the "one cloud, one network, one platform" intelligent digital infrastructure in Africa and promote government policies and action plans. The forum aims to foster collaboration among key stakeholders and decision-makers to develop a unified approach towards future oriented digital infrastructure development in Africa.

Content:

The forum will revolve around the following key themes:

1. Smart Infrastructure for the Digital Economy:

- Discuss the importance of smart infrastructure in driving economic growth and digital transformation across Africa.

- Explore innovative technologies, such as artificial intelligence, Cloud, Big data analytics, and connectivity, that can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of digital infrastructure.

2. Sharing of Strategies and best Practices in Key Countries/Carriers

- Highlight success stories and best practices from countries and carriers that have successfully deploy Network, Cloud and Platform for Digital transformation.

3. Africa AI and computing Strategies that keep pace with the reality

- Address the challenges and opportunities in AI and Computing strategies Including planning, infrastructure deployment, and regulatory frameworks.

- Share insights on strategies for inclusive and sustainable AI development, considering the diverse needs and contexts of African countries.

4. ICT Talent Development Practice

- Present Huawei's ICT talent development initiatives and programs aimed at nurturing a skilled workforce for the digital era.

- Discuss the importance of investing in human capital and building a strong ICT talent pipeline to support the development and maintenance of intelligent digital infrastructure.

Format:

The Ministerial Forum will consist of keynote speeches, panel discussions, and interactive sessions. Participants will include, Ministers, government officials, industry leaders, experts, and representatives from international organizations.

Expected Outcome:

By the end of the Ministerial Forum, it is expected that participants will have:

- Developed a shared understanding of the importance and benefits of a future-oriented intelligent digital infrastructure in Africa.

- Identified key areas for collaboration and policy alignment among stakeholders.

- Explored potential partnerships and initiatives to accelerate the development of Intelligent digital infrastructure in Africa.

- Formulated recommendations for governments and policymakers to promote the adoption of national industrial policies supporting intelligent digital infrastructure.

Key Messages:

The key messages to convey during the forum will be centered around the theme of "Building a Future-Oriented, Intelligent Digital Infrastructure for Africa." The objective is to prompt African governments to focus on developing future-oriented intelligent digital infrastructures based on the following key points:

1. Setting Clear Strategy Vision and Plans:

- Encourage governments to establish a clear strategy and vision for digital infrastructure development.

- Emphasize the importance of comprehensive plans that outline the steps and milestones required to build future-oriented intelligent Digital infrastructures.

2. Building the Future-Oriented Intelligent Digital Infrastructure:

- Highlight the significance of investing in Network, Cloud, and Platform technologies.

- **Network:** Advocate for the deployment of ultra-high-speed Gbps broadband (5G, Fiber) to ensure widespread connectivity.

- **Cloud:** Emphasize the need for efficient national-level government and enterprise cloud to create a national-level digital infrastructure for government affairs, and enterprises to improve overall administrative efficiency and exercise digital sovereignty.

- **Platform**: Stress the importance of high-performance computing (HPC), artificial intelligence (AI), capabilities to enable AI to reshape thousands of industries with advanced applications and services.

3. Promoting Digital Talent:

- Encourage governments to prioritize the development of digital talent and skills.

- Advocate for initiatives that nurture a skilled workforce capable of driving digital transformation and maintaining intelligent digital infrastructures.

Agenda

Module	Time	Topic	Speaker
Day 0:10:00-12:40, November 13, Building a Future-oriented Intelligent Digital Infrastructure for Africa			
Opening remarks	10:00 – 10:05	Opening speech	ATU Secretary General
	10:05 – 10:15	Keynote Speech	Chen Lei, Huawei
	10:15 – 10:30	Welcome speech by the host country	Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) South Africa
African National Digital Strategy - Intelligent Digital Infrastructure Laying the Foundation for Africa's Digital Future	10:30 – 10:40	Third-party consulting insight: Africa's smart infrastructure for the digital economy	Africa Analysis
	10:40 – 10:50	National Digital Infrastructure Drives Digital Economy Development and Builds a Digital Intelligence Society	HQ expert
	10:50 – 11:00	South Africa SITA Cloud Helping National Digital Transformation	South African customers
	11:00 – 11:10	National e-Government Network Driving Digital Uganda Strategy Success	Minister of Communications, Uganda
	11:10 - 11:20	Make full use of carriers' main network construction force and build future-oriented 5G/fiber networks	CEO of XXX carrier
	11:20 - 11:30	African countries need national AI and computing strategies that keep pace with the reality	(AI HUB, a research institute) Subject: TUT, UJ Or Smart Africa.
	11:30 - 11:40	ICT Talent Development Practices for Africa Digitalization	Wan Wei
White Paper Release	11:40 - 11:45	South Africa Fiber Strategy White Paper Released	Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) South Africa
Ministerial panel discussion	11:45 – 12:30	Communications Minister's Forum (full investment in intelligent digital infrastructure and talent cultivation)	Secretary-General of IDC, ATU, communications ministers of various countries, experts from universities, etc.
Joint Communique Release Ceremony	12:30 - 12:40	ATU, together with communications ministers, released a joint communique on future-oriented intelligent digital infrastructure and talent cultivation.	ATU and communications ministers of each country