1. Title
Approaches for Deploying IP-based Network Infrastructure in Developing Countries.

2. Organizers and Panellists
Organizers:
Association for Progressive Communication (APC), and Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA).

Panellists:
Vincent Waiswa Bagiire (Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa); Howard Williams (University of Strathclyde); George Sadowsky (Global Internet Policy Initiative); Peter H. Hellmonds (Siemens Networks); Jean-François Soupizet (European Commission); Michael Silber (Michalsons Attorneys).

3. Discussion

Emphasis of the workshop was on sharing experiences and lessons that have been learnt and on the deployment of IP-based infrastructure. Presentations and discussions during the workshop were structured around the three areas of policy, legislation and regulation, and business models adopted by the private sector.

In the area of policy, one of the key themes emerging from the workshop related to capacity building, in particular of regulatory authorities. Whilst there was initial disagreement about the level of capacity regulators from developing countries were thought to have, it was agreed that more capacity building was required in creating an environment that enables investment in infrastructure, and also to support such an environment.

In relation to an enabling environment, it was noted that traditionally, telecom restructuring/reform placed emphasis on the independence of regulator. This has however translated to an adherence to the title of 'independence' rather than addressing the conditions that create a need for independence. Thus, we now have situations in which countries with 'independent' regulators are still lacking in transparency, clarity, and predictability in areas of legislation and regulation.

Lack of transparency, clarity, and predictability were identified as factors discouraging investment by private sector organizations in developing country markets. Other inhibitors include uncertain revenue streams and the high risk businesses associate with developing markets. The private sector is encouraged by countries in which the rule of law exists and is seen to be applied and enforced in a reasonable amount of time (predictability). Governance issues (excessive bureaucracies, high taxation etc.) are

therefore key (from the perspective of the private sector) to creating an environment which attracts private sector investment. Also important is the vibrancy of local businesses; as a private sector panelist stated: "… you don't want to be somewhere where all you deal with is the government."

Issues relating to the ease of (both local and international companies) operating in the local environment were also touched upon. Here it was noted that there are geographic variations to the challenges facing access and initiatives aimed at addressing them need to be tailored and targeted to match the levels in which these challenges occur. It was also noted that some challenges lie outside the domain of conventional Telecommunications and Internet governance. For example energy policies, particularly relating to the supply of electricity in developing countries, have a direct impact on the availability, use, capacity, and requirements of terminal devices, and need to be thought through in discussing access. As a comment made during the workshop reflected: "… could we end up with the creation of all these networks and then not have the means to connect?"

4. Inventory of events and actors related to the issue under discussion
Regional Internet backbone infrastructure in East and Southern Africa; infrastructure development in small countries; regulatory capacity building.

Actors: Regional and national governments, development finance institutions, regional and national regulators, private sector, international institutions, 'capacity builders', civil society.

5. Possible follow-up
Framework for identifying and categorizing barriers and challenges to infrastructure development along international, regional, local levels; and the positioning of initiatives targeted at appropriate levels.

6. Useful links

Mike Jensen (2006) *Open Access: Lowering the costs of international bandwidth in Africa*, Association for Progressive Communications. Available online at http://rights.apc.org/papers.shtml

Mike Jensen (2005) *Interconnection Costs*, Association for Progressive Communications. Available online at http://rights.apc.org/papers.shtml