



Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

into the Future for PNG!

Proceedings of the All Day Workshop
held at UPNG on 23rd January 2008



Institute of National Affairs
August 2008

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Acknowledgements

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Foreword

A major all day workshop was held on Information and Communications Technology (ICT), at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) on the 23rd of January, was organised by the Institute of National Affairs (INA), together with UPNG and other partners. The workshop brought together over 300 people, with international and local speakers from a wide range of fields, including: ICT providers, commercial users (such as the financial sector), government agencies and regulators, education users and distance-learning providers, international agencies, academics as well as the wider public and users from the informal sector, who are belatedly beginning to taste the opportunities opened up by improved mobile phone access and other technologies. The workshop continued well into the evening and was followed by further discussion in another venue till late at night.

The active participation of ordinary citizens and small businesses demonstrates that Papua New Guineans recognise the need to embrace the opportunities presented by ICT, rather than adhere to inflexible and flawed monopoly arrangements. The participants overwhelmingly voiced their desire to see their country move forward by pursuing the opportunities made available through competition between companies, proactive use of converging technologies and freedom from the constraints imposed by the old system of monopolies and vested interests.

The workshop concluded that: -

1. Connectivity between mobile phone networks is required immediately, with affordable “termination” costs (i.e. the costs of connecting through other service – including landlines – must not be marked up severely);
2. ICT policy formulation must be rational, transparent and participatory – with an effective mechanism for private sector/civil society dialogue (e.g. through CIMC/or restored Impediments Committee/NWGIBI). Transparent and open dialogue is also required for media, including television aspects of ICT policy;
3. ICT policy should be forward-looking, enabling converging technology (mobile/Internet/cable/VSAT/main gateways/last mile access, etc), not artificially locking PNG into obsolete, exclusive or current systems;
4. multiple independent gateways (for mobile telephone and data/Internet) are required to provide competitive and better service delivery and reliability;
5. the regulatory environment must be transparent and independent (run by ICCC, with PANGTEL as licensing authority);
6. improved rural livelihoods are a primary focus, entailing affordable access to mobiles and the Internet, including for education and banking; and
7. community service obligations must be fulfilled

The Pacific Region has been the last region to benefit from competition in ICT and PNG is among the last countries in the Pacific to do so. Sadly, this delay has denied many opportunities to the people of PNG, particularly the young, who are missing the opportunity to develop familiarity with ICT and the associated valuable learning experiences (including distance learning) now available in schools around the world. Although the Internet and mobile phones have some negative implications, unless Papua New Guineans gain widespread access to these technologies they will be unable to succeed in competitive markets, particularly employment markets, meaning many job opportunities will continue to be taken by those from overseas. It is important that the country’s prospects, its economy and especially the futures of its young people are not handicapped by rigid government structures and protectionist policies.

A highly respected Papua New Guinean, who has for many years worked extensively around the world, observed that it is increasingly clear that countries which have fostered competition in information and communications technologies and provided opportunities in this field for their young people are the ones who have benefited from, rather than been victims of, globalisation. We need to ensure that Papua New Guineans are beneficiaries of globalisation and not its victims being held down by backward and anti-competitive policies.

This volume is an unedited presentation of many, though not all, of the papers presented during the workshop. Some of the shorter presentations, notably from the small and informal business sector (which were not written up) are not included here. Nor is the lively, even impassioned, discussion which occurred throughout the day; almost all of which emphasised the benefits from competition experienced since the second half of 2007 and the need to continue and extend that competition as widely as possible to enable the whole population to benefit from ICT at affordable rates. Government has an important function in this process. In particular government must ensure that competition is fair through an impartial regulatory system and ensure public facilities, such as schools and health centres, have access to information technology in addition to other essential public goods and services (such as trained staff, other school materials and medicines).

Paul Barker

Director

Institute of National Affairs

Port Moresby

February 2008



Programme
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
into the Future for PNG!

All Day Workshop – Main Lecture Theatre, UPNG – 23rd January 2008

08.00-0830	Registration
Opening Session	Chairman: Prof. David Kavanamur, School of Business, UPNG
08.30-08.45	Welcome: Prof Ross Hynes, Vice-Chancellor
08.45-09.05	Address: ICT - The Way Forward - Prof Ken Sumbuk Pro-Vice Chancellor:
09.05-09.35	Theme – Where we are now and what is the vision for communications for the future? ICT Policy Directions – Lois Stanley , lawyer/ICT Specialist, UPNG
09.35-09.45	Questions and Discussion
09.45-09.55	<i>Coffee/Tea break</i>
Session 2	Information and Communication Technology (ICT) – The Technology - What it can do for PNG? – Plans and constraints. Chairperson: Ms Winifred Kamit, Snr Partner, Gadens Lawyers; former Chairperson, Business Council of PNG
09.55-10.35	Mobile Telephony – - Peter Loko - B Mobile (<i>spoke instead during the evening</i>) - Kevin O’Sullivan – Digicel - Ravu Taviri, Greencom
10.35-10.45	Questions and discussion
10.45-11.50	Telecommunication Technology to Facilitate Information and Communication Technology - Elias Mandawali –lecturer, Electrical Engineering, University of Technology ISP service providers - Sundar Ramamurthy Data Nets - Tony Westaway, Datec
11.50-12.00	Questions and discussion
12.00-13.00	<i>Lunch</i>
Session 3	User Needs and Opportunities Chairman: Dr Thomas Webster, Director, NRI
13.00-13.45	Education:-- - David Leeming, PFNet and Distance Learning (DLCP), Solomon Islands - Dr Peter Anderson, Head, Dept of Information Systems, DWU
13.45-13.55	Questions and discussion

13.55-15.10	<p>Business (including urban and rural Informal Sector): - Paul Bluett, ENBP, CCI Banking: -Alphonsus Rosario/Garry Tunstall, General Manager, ANZ Bank Group (PNG) -Paul Thornton - PNG Microfinance Ltd Agriculture – -Graham Ainui/Peter Kili/Ron Ganarafa/Graham Ross (Rural Industries Council) Informal Sector: -Mary Saun, floriculturalist, and Wilfred John, Bume Electronics (informal sector IT specialist and trainer)</p>
15.10-15.20	Questions and Discussion
15.20-15.30	<i>Coffee/tea break</i>
Session 4:	ICT Policy, development and competition: Chairman: Henry Kila, President, Business Council of PNG
15.30-16.05	<p>Clarifying ICT Policy in PNG -Henao Iduhu, A/Secretary for Communication (<i>did not attend</i>) -Noel Mobiha, Communications Adviser, Dept of Prime Minister and NEC</p>
16.05-16.30	<p>The role of competition in promoting ICT development: -Ed Willett, (former) Commissioner Australian Consumer and Competition Commission (ACCC) and (former) Chairman, ACCC Communications Committee</p>
16.30-17.05	<p>- Stanley Alphonse for Thomas Abe, ICCC - Kila Gulo, Director, Regulatory, PANGTEL</p>
17.05-17.25	Panel Question and Answer/General Discussion (all session speakers, plus Dept of Treasury, Moses Koiri - IPBC, Susan Setae –FSVAC, Dr Lawrence Kalinoe – Constitutional Review Commission)
17.25-17.35	<i>Coffee/Tea Break</i>
17.35-18.20	-Creating consensus on 3 priorities for ICT policy – 3 break out groups to draw up 3 ICT priorities to recommend to Government (this may continue into the next day -24th January- if required, with break-out groups on overall policy, mobile telephony, Internet and other telecommunications, tv/and other media, if desired)
19.15-20.30	<p>Cocktails/snacks hosted by Port Moresby Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Ichizen Restaurant (Champion Parade) –</p> <p>Address: ICT Development – international experience Natasha Beschorner, Senior ICT Policy Specialist Global Information & Communications Technology Dept The World Bank, Jakarta</p>



