

# commonwealth ICT Ministers Forum '18

18 - 20 JUNE 2018, LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

**Committed Leadership:**  
Harbouring a Roadmap for  
ICT Enabled Growth



## Commonwealth ICT Ministers Meeting Day 1 – Closed Door Session Marlborough House, London June 18, 2018

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### Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony involved remarks from the following officials:

- Mr Gilbert Peterson, S.C., Chairman CTO and Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
- Baroness Patricia Scotland, Secretary General, Commonwealth Secretariat
- Hon Silvio Schembri, Parliamentary Secretary for Financial Services, Digital Economy and Innovation, Office of the Prime Minister, Republic of Malta



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Mr Marcel Belingue, Acting Secretary General, CTO appointed the Chair and Vice Chair of the meeting which were Hon Margot James MP, Minister of State for Digital and Culture, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, UK and Hon Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, Minister of Communication and Information Infrastructure, Ghana.



A keynote address was delivered by the Chair which outlined the UK's commitment to cybersecurity and informed that the UK will be supporting Malcolm Johnson in his candidacy for ITU Deputy Secretary General during the Plenipotentiary 2018.

## Session 1: Universal Broadband

The first session of the day on universal broadband was chaired by the Hon Margot James and involved a presentation on the topic by Mrs Gisa Fuatai Purcell, Director, ICT Development, CTO.

### Discussions

- UK – The country is investing in super fast broadband and achieved 95% access to superfast (24mbps) on UK premises. There is still 1.5 million premises which lack this access. Many rural areas still lack so the priority is to bring these rural areas up to speed like the urban areas. There is also a focus on full fibre connections targeting 15million premises by 2025 and nationwide coverage by 2033. The UK is working towards establishing what type of market structure will attract investment. A future telecoms infrastructure review is therefore being worked on by DCMS and will report this summer. The UK is also introducing a universal service obligation by 2020 that will provide a digital safety net with basic speed of 10mb/ps which would be a legal right for everyone to access. There remains challenges with take-up which is at 50% across the country. This is due in part as some citizens don't see the need for broadband while some don't know that access exists.

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- India – The country's digital footprint is the fastest growing in the world. India's data economy and digital technologies have evolved to assist in empowerment and India willing to support other developing nations along with the ITU and CTO. India is willing to do technology transfer and assist in best practices including funding models. The country has undertaken a massive project to bridge digital divide known as Bharatnet, currently at its midway mark with completion expected by March 2019 which will trigger era of broadband within the country. India is working with ITU and other agencies on standards and frameworks for the secure use of ICTs and in building confidence and trust. India would like to work with CTO members to develop standards in next generation technologies. A new national digital communications policy 2018 will soon be launched and it is expected that Wi-Fi hotspots will reach 5 million by 2020 and 10 million by 2022.



- Namibia – The country is challenged by the issue of uptake as the broadband provided needs to be effectively utilised. Digital literacy plays key role in the uptake of broadband and needs to be addressed. The biggest issue faced in Namibia is affordability, to which the government is trying to address as uptake cannot be realised if it's not affordable. Namibia has invested heavily in undersea cable. The size of country and its sparse population presents a challenge with economies of scale in terms of getting returns from huge investments while ensuring inclusivity. Namibia has established a USF but it is not fully operational and regulations exist which place obligations on operators.
- Uganda – The country is currently rewriting its broadband policy so that it defines the entire spectrum for the ecosystem, inclusive of the private and public sector. Infrastructure sharing is viewed as important as broadband infrastructure is considered a public good which means that the public and private sector should be able to share infrastructure, allowing for costs to be minimised and avoiding the overlap of fibre lines. The question of whether governments should look at infrastructure as any other public good and invest in it like other areas was raised? While the country is heavily invested in optic fibre, this is vulnerable to catastrophes and cannot be deployed everywhere. In light of this, could fibre

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be complemented with satellites and what should be the right hybrid infrastructure to ensure universal broadband and connectivity?

- Ghana – There are 5 undersea cables landing in Ghana and the government has invested in the eastern corridor fibre project. Private companies have also invested which are concentrated in key economic zones of country. Achieving the last mile of connectivity is a challenge and operators want government investment in this. Government is exploring the possibility of using aerial fibre and Ghana is seeking guidance on cost efficient options. There needs to be consideration on how to invest in fibre infrastructure without affecting other areas such as roads and schools. All e-government infrastructure which is being implemented needs secure and strong connectivity to work.
- CTO – government needs to work with operators and a USF can assist in funding. One option is that countries can put out a tender on setting up infrastructure in areas lacking connectivity and put an incentive, for example, 20% of money back if this is completed. Countries should also look at a mix of fibre and satellite in areas best suited. Landlocked countries are challenged as they sometimes need MOUs with other countries to get cables.
- CTO – The question of investment seems to be on the table. A Commonwealth Investment Forum was held last year in Dubai and highlighted the strong need for public sector investment. There needs however, to be the right conducive environment for this and innovation is an important factor in enabling access. Innovation should not be left to the private sector solely as policy makers also need to innovate. The limitations of a forum like the Minister's Forum is that there is no financing sector present. There needs to be a shift in thinking and political courage to drive ideas forward. There is an urgent call for infrastructure and online services and governments need to learn from private sector on offering online services
- Guernsey - The issues on economies of scale do not apply to the country as they are small in size. There exists a penetration rate of 97% for broadband and there are 3 ISP operators. There is a limit for smaller countries in relying on private sector to innovate and invest. While Guernsey has 5 cables, public-private partnerships need to include the regulator and a balance needs to be worked out.
- Cameroon – Broadband is the only thing that can help developing countries catch up to developed countries as it can help earn income and help youths to innovate. In one university area of Cameroon, youths are making millions of dollars by selling apps. Sometimes fibre can give too much speed so copper and microwave technologies can be relevant. Governments need to offer more online services in order to get persons online, and sensible content needs to be promoted. Infrastructure sharing is important as well.

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## Session 2 – Over the Top (OTT) Services

This session was chaired by Hon Ursula Owusu-Ekuful and began with a presentation on OTTs by Dr Martin Koyabe, Manager, Technical Support and Consultancy, CTO.

### Discussions

- Ghana – commended CTO for comprehensive report on OTTs
- Dominica – the question of how do we license OTT operators was raised. USF comes from operators and there are complaints that OTTs are using their infrastructure but there is no regulation/license in place. Small island developing states in particular are grappling with addressing these challenges.
- Uganda – the country is attempting to levy tax on OTTs. People using the service are taxed but there remains the question of how can the providers like Uber be taxed, and how can OTTs be regulated in order to remove the tax burden from users.

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- Samoa – regulators find it challenging to implement USF obligations when traditional operators complain about OTTs. How can we move forward? Samoa is interested in learning about India's approach to net neutrality.
- Tanzania – operators/countries should develop their own OTT apps - How do we endure interoperability with such development?
- CTO – critical mass across jurisdiction is important. The study found that it is important to consider the source of information and consumer when it comes to whispering. Taxation is a complex issue with the source, medium and user being key considerations. Net neutrality was meant to avoid discrimination of traffic across networks.
- Namibia- there are 1.5 billion Facebook users worldwide but how many are in Namibia? Users in Namibia may amount to a drop in the ocean so a regional approach is an option to address challenges. Does the study appreciate existing legal and regulatory frameworks and do these address concerns?
- Turks and Caicos – Regulators cannot measure the services being used. Government needs to start owning the infrastructure which can help regulators to measure how much data is being used. Innovation is also required. Larger countries that have government owned infrastructure may have the option to block OTTs if they do not pay taxes. This is not feasible in smaller states such as the Turks and Caicos. Government needs to own the network which would solve facility sharing.
- India – TRAI is examining regulatory and licensing framework for OTTs.
- Cameroon – given the demand for OTTs by people, you cannot fight the providers. Not enough innovation however market is eroded. Data security is a main problem as companies such as Facebook make money from data. More OTTs will keep coming onto the market. Protection of people is critical. Business wise there is positive benefit of OTT so it should be encouraged.
- CTO – there is a need to have legal instruments for a conducive environment therefore data protection and privacy laws can be useful. Legal frameworks for countries may need updating.
- Ghana – communications service tax which tax all communications – not sure if OTT falls under this – still grappling. Data security and content – defamation rules apply – how is data that we freely load to networks handled or used? We should be looking at our regulation and laws to better protect our people. Regulation can stifle innovation. OTTs have become a part of our life.



## Session 3 – Cybersecurity

This session was chaired by Hon Ursula Owusu-Ekuful and began with a presentation on OTTs by Dr Martin Koyabe, Manager, Technical Support and Consultancy, CTO.

### Discussions

- Ghana- the country has developed a cybersecurity policy which was adopted in 2016 and began implementation in 2017. There tends to be a turf war on which Ministry will lead implementation of the policy. In Ghana's case the Ministry of Communications leads. A multi-sector working group has been established to help build trust and a Ministerial steering committee also exists to oversee the process, along with a cybersecurity advisor. An implementation plan has been developed and Ghana also conducted a review using the Oxford Cyber Maturity Model. The report of this assessment is currently being reviewed. In Ghana, there exists sectoral CSIRTS, one within the telecoms sector hosted by the regulator and one in financial sector. The national CSIRT provides overall policy direction. There are problems with low remuneration in public sector there a program has been launched to develop IT professionals and retain persons by paying them better and to avoid them moving to private sector. The Government is reaching out to its diaspora to assist in addressing this challenge. Another critical area where attention is needed is that of capacity building and child online protection. UNICEF assisting with child online protection and assistance would also be welcomed from the CTO. The EU is also assisting with cybercrime capacity building and assistance has also been received from the USA. Cabinet has approved accession to Budapest Declaration and African Union Malabo Declaration on Cybercrime.
- Gambia – the country is working on establishing a national cybersecurity commission which is a component of a National ICT Commission. The establishment of a CSIRT is also being finalised by Ministry of Telecommunications. Gambia is signatory to the AU Convention on cybersecurity and personal data. Gambia is of the view that CTO can work with small states to help establish frameworks as cybercrime is a global concern and small states need assistance. Cybercriminals can use smaller less advanced countries to get to larger countries.
- CTO - Commonwealth Secretariat is also doing work in cybercrime and the CTO does a range of capacity building work.
- Guernsey – the country welcomes the opportunity to work together on cybersecurity and recognises vital role it plays in economic development. Guernsey is currently setting up a CSIRT and a cyber information sharing portal with the UK. Guernsey happy to offer help other states as they have a CIO in place.

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- UK – The UK underlined its support for Commonwealth Cyber Declaration which was adopted in April at CHOGM and signifies a commitment to cooperation and sharing best practice. The UK will continue to develop its cybersecurity capabilities and share information and best practice and the National Cyber Security Centre estimates that 80% of attacks in UK can be prevented with simple best practices. It is important to consider how to develop the skills that are needed now and how to also develop skills needed for future, as well as how to retain persons. There are challenges in creating a culture of cybersecurity as behaviour change is difficult. A total of £15 million has been allocated to cybersecurity capacity building out of CHOGM.
- India – the country would like to be part of cybersecurity cooperation. India has a national CSIRT and is in the process of setting up sectoral CSIRTs, and willing to share best practices in this regard. There should be a framework and draw on process – have capacity building programs by working together. India would like to continue participating in capacity building programs.
- Samoa – the country has a challenge in capacity building not just in ICT sector, but in other sectors including finance and law enforcement. Samoa would like to see more international cooperation from bigger countries and would like to learn more to build capacity and share internally.
- Montserrat – the country is trying to get its legal framework in place and look at what form their cybersecurity centre may take. Montserrat has received assistance from CTO and would like to collaborate more with others, especially the UK.
- Ghana – there exists a problem with use of platforms such as Yahoo and Gmail for official work and working on changing attitudes is viewed as one of the biggest challenges. Other challenges include the use of flash drives and unauthorised external devices, as well as unauthorised downloads which provide avenues for malicious incidents. How do we deal with changing attitudes particularly when we work in silos?
- CTO – some findings indicate that local domain name hosts are not always reliable therefore persons prefer to use Gmail and other platforms as a means for official communications. There is therefore a need to encourage reliable services which can run effectively. CTO will initiate more programmes around capacity building. CTO and the Commonwealth Secretariat occasionally work together and there has been engagement with national security agencies as well. Increased regional cooperation around privacy and security will be reflected in capacity building programmes.
- Namibia – can a more logical or sequential approach be followed in relation to capacity building needs?



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- Ghana – a request was made for colleagues who have legislation on interception of electronic communications to share experiences as Ghana is facing challenges due to backlash on interception for security and beyond. Encrypted devices also pose a challenge for prosecution. Ghana would like assistance from countries who have this experience.
- Trinidad and Tobago – the country has an Interception of Communications Act which is drafted in a way that a court order is needed and only authorised persons including the Commissioner of Police and Chief of Defence Staff can apply. The order must also be used within a specific period of time.
- India – the country has established an interception mechanism which requires proper sanction from an appropriate authority. Sanctions have a process from bottom to top. India can share best practice of this. Encryption is also viewed as a challenge.
- Ghana – Commonwealth Secretariat has informed that there is a website of legal resources which is country specific and includes an innovation centre.

## Session 4 – Commonwealth Coordination

This session was chaired by Hon Ursula Owusu-Ekuful and began with a presentation on the work of the CTO as it relates to Commonwealth Coordination by Mrs Gisa Fuatai Purcell, Director ICT Operations, CTO.

### Discussions

- Ghana – one outstanding issue includes the digital divide and digital gender divide. Ghana is conducting activities relating to Girls in ICT. Persons with disability cannot be ignored.
- Gambia – the country also has a Girls in ICT Program. The issue of domain names is of interest as Gambia's domain has been hijacked for the past 7 years. Tuvalu has had similar experience and went through a long legal process. CTO can make introduction to ICANN.
- Ghana – Ghana seeking re-election into the ITU Council during the Plenipotentiary (PP) Meeting later this year.
- Bahamas – seeking election into ITU Council for the first time with the intention of supporting and being a voice for small island states.
- Ghana – CTO should compile list of candidates seeking election.

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- CTO – The CTO has featured Commonwealth ITU candidates in its e-commonwealth magazine and would be happy to feature everyone in attendance in the next issue.
- Ghana – it is found that for developing countries, their voices can be drowned out as the issues being discussed at global ICT events are not fully understood. There are preparatory meetings such as with the ITU, however, the information from these meetings do not always feed back to the relevant persons. What can we do to help this? Can we share concerns and have positions and interventions made before these meetings?
- CTO will announce its preparatory activities for the ITU World Radiocommunications Conference 2019 and would count on the support of the Commonwealth.
- South Africa and Tanzania are also seeking re-election to ITU Council.
- SADC States have endorsed Dr Cosmas Zavazava for BDT Director at the ITU.

## Wrap-up Session

The session papers on the four topics were all endorsed by the meeting, and approved the following action points which were outlined in the papers:

- **Broadband:** Ministers to endorse the paper and instruct CTO to work with Member States in advancing policies and implementation at the national and regional level.
- **OTT:** Request CTO to assist member states in creating conducive and enabling frameworks to enable the provision of OTT services to benefit all stakeholders, including governments and regulators.
- **Cybersecurity:** Instruct CTO on the projects to be undertaken by the CTO in relation to cybersecurity.
- **Commonwealth Coordination:** Reaffirm support for the CTO in coordinating the positions of the Commonwealth at international ICT and telecommunications gatherings.