

Hamadoun Touré Opening Keynote
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Key highlight: Touré said, “We should not forget that two-thirds of the world's people still do not have access to the Internet. And the number of people worldwide with broadband access is still relatively small, even with the very rapid growth of new technologies such as mobile broadband. This means that we risk creating a world of the Internet rich and Internet poor, a world where the new broadband divide is even more worrying than the digital divide we had before ubiquitous mobile phones.”

Video posted by ISOC on Livestream:

http://www.livestream.com/inet1/video?clipId=pla_a8cf1242-ee81-4f6f-a36b-69cdab6ee793&utm_source=lslibrary&utm_medium=ui-thumb

Touré Keynote:

It is a great pleasure for me to be here with you in Geneva with enthusiastic and influential supporters of the Internet as we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Internet Society. I would like to congratulate Lynn St.Amour and all the fathers and mothers of the Internet who are here, and most importantly the children of the Internet who are here.

After hearing about the past and the future of the Internet I would like to say a few words about the present and the role the Internet and especially broadband is already playing in making the world a better place. Through accelerating progress toward the Millennium Development Goals, and I am glad that Jimmy [Wales, in a previous keynote] gave some very good figures about countries like Nigeria and how the developing world is moving along. Indeed connectivity is no longer a luxury but a necessity and this is as true for the world's poorest countries as it is here in Geneva or in the United States. E-health, e-education, e-banking, gender empowerment and youth employment, these are just some of the few opportunities that are making our society a fair and equitable one.

Ladies and gentlemen, we live in a world with more than 6 billion mobile cellular subscriptions and where 2.4 billion people are connected in the Internet. This global hyperconnectivity is already allowing us to leverage the power of technology and especially mobile technologies to make the world a better place. We are seeing mobile devices and the Internet bringing people and the things together in ways that we could never have dreamed just a decade or two ago.

On the social/political level the Internet is rapidly removing the barriers that once separated those with power from those without it. And this is as true for corporations and even for individuals as it is for governments.

My message here today is that we need to embrace this new era of accountability as a good thing, because if we handle things right, it should be perfectly possible to respect the necessary boundaries of privacy and security while maintaining the right levels of transparency and accountability.

Already we are seeing social media redefining the landscape we live in. And as people said

during the wave of the social process last year during the Arab Spring, we use Facebook to mobilize, we use Twitter to report and we use YouTube to broadcast.

Of course, today, as we have today Jimmy Wales as one of our speakers, I should also add we use Wikipedia to research and factcheck. This is the first time in human history that almost everyone, everyone has access to the enabling power of technology. It is the first time that they can put themselves on the map or have a choice and, *most* importantly, have a voice in their own language. It is the first time that they can become truly visible in their own right by passing their official narrative with quite a remarkable speed and for the first time it has become impossible to be airbrushed out of history.

This dramatically affects the relationship between the governors and the governed, between the company and its customers and even between husbands and wives and parents and their children. The democratization not just of communication but of knowledge is already having a very profound and I believe beneficial effect on our society.

Those in positions of power will need to embrace and recognize this. Those who may once have been or felt powerless need to recognize that they are the new agents of change and they also need to recognize they have the responsibility to use that newfound influence carefully and wisely.

Distinguished guests, the rapid evolution of the Internet is also having a huge impact on the global economy. Of course, with businesses increasingly moving online and billions of dollars worth of online transactions taking place every week and every day, we are witnessing the very rapid virtualization of many goods, from books and films to music and software. And while most physical goods are still being shipped in to the real world they are very often being ordered online.

Globally, manufacturing increasingly depends on the very short supply chain management processes that only the Internet can make possible. We are also seeing unprecedented collaboration online when it comes to research and development.

We should not forget however that two-thirds of the world's people still do not have access to the Internet. And the number of people worldwide with broadband access is still relatively small, even with the very rapid growth of new technologies such as mobile broadband. This means that we risk creating a world of the Internet rich and Internet poor, a world where the new broadband divide is even more worrying than the digital divide we had before ubiquitous mobile phones.

[Joking] And talking about mobile phones, at least as Secretary-General of ITU now I know - I was always curious about what type of phone Jimmy was using. Now I know about it.

(Laughter)

This is why ITU and UNESCO set up the Broadband Commission in 2010 to encourage the implementation of national broadband plans and to increase access to broadband-enabled applications and services. Broadband is already radically transforming society, and delivering sustainable, social and economic progress through an environment of constant innovation and a

wealth of job-creation opportunities - and it is all about job creation.

Last month I had a summit in Doha called the Connect Arab Summit. I invited all the Arab leaders, and my point was that the Arab Spring, the revolution that we have seen in the Arab world was created by those youngsters because they had no jobs. If in six months' time they still are not working, they will come back in the streets and - using the same devices that they've used, and that message was loud and clear. It is all about creating opportunities. This is why broadband networks must be considered in the 21st century as basic infrastructure just like roads, railways, water and power networks.

In a more populous, aging world broadband is vital in helping to deliver essential services such as healthcare, education and good government. Broadband is helping us address the biggest issues of our time such as climate change and environmental sustainability. And it is revolutionizing the way that goods and services are created, delivered and used. In an aging world the elderly and any people with any kind of disability need to benefit from the good use of the information society to help improve their quality of life.

We must therefore work hard to ensure that everyone wherever they live and whatever their circumstances has access to the benefits of broadband Internet. This is not just about delivering connectivity for connectivity's sake or even about giving people access to the undoubted benefits of social communication. It is about leveraging the power of connected technologies to make the world a better place. We are already seeing this with the extraordinary wealth of apps that are available for mobile devices and those numbers increase by tens of thousands every day.

This could never have happened without the Internet and convergence, which have brought two crucial new forces in to play: the death of distance and the democratization of information and knowledge.

This is a true beauty of Internet. It finally makes the world's riches accessible to anyone at any time, everywhere whatever their circumstances are.

So once more let me wish the Internet Society, ISOC, and all the founders of the Internet and all the users today a very happy anniversary. To those who are making the Internet the most robust, adaptable and accessible global medium we have ever known for the positive transformation of people's lives, thank you very much.