

<<August 3, 2007>>

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Charles U. Eke <bychief@yahoo.com>

Chris Uwaje, (Fncs, Fiap) <uwajenet@yahoo.de>

**Dear Charles:**

(1) Many thanks for your msg (**ATTACHMENT I**) with a very interesting news clipping about the conference held in Owerri, Imo State of Nigeria.

**Dear Chris:**

(2) I am delighted to know that you made a significant contribution to the success of this conference.

(3) Yes, I agree with you that the proliferation of ICTs, especially WiFi and WiMax, would eradicate poverty and isolation in remote/rural areas of developing countries. Let's work together toward this end.

(4) Hope to see you again soon.

Best, Tak

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**ATTACHMENT I**

**From:** Charles Ugo Eke <bychief@yahoo.com>

**Date:** Tue, 31 Jul 2007 05:19:11 -0700 (PDT)

**To:** "Dr. Takeshi Utsumi" <utsumi@columbia.edu>, Wole Soboyejo <soboyejo@princeton.edu>, Charles Dawson <sdawson@bctpartners.com>

**Subject:** Fwd: How to attain MDGs using IT, by Anyim, Ohakim, others

It is interesting to know that they are thinking along the way with us...WiMAX

As a personal friend and partner with Chris Uwaje, he has been advocating this for some time now.

-Charles

Date: Mon, 30 Jul 2007 19:09:13 -0700 (PDT)

Subject: How to attain MDGs using IT, by Anyim, Ohakim, others

**How to attain MDGs using IT, by Anyim,**

## **Ohakim, others**

*By Sonny Aragba-Akpore*

**F**ORMER Senate President, Anyim Pius Anyim, stood before this very large capacity audience in an equally very large hall crammed with humanity on Tuesday morning.

He beam a smile, cleared his throat and began a guttural presentation of a subject he has got to know through attendance of seminars, conferences and other literatures - Information Technology and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Anyim, a lawyer, thought he was at the hallowed chamber, the Senate, where he held sway as first senator, then later as Senate president before he took a bow.

He cleared his throat again as if he was going to address his colleagues. He was wrong. He was going to address the 21st yearly conference of the Nigeria Computer Society (NCS) and the venue was the Imo Concorde Hotel, Owerri.

"Today, this conference is going to focus on connecting IT with MDGs," Anyim began. "In a plain language this conference would play up the strategies and tools of IT that are indispensable for the actualisation of MDGs," the former Senate president continued. Quoting copiously from a presentation made by former UNESCO Secretary General, A.M. Mbon, the former president said: "IT has opened such tremendous vista for modern societies that any failure to master it would mean a life of permanent subordination, for IT is more than a form of power, it is a power system."

According to Mbon, "the technology which it involved is not just one form of technology among others but an ability to make use of other technologies to give or refuse access to a whole range of scientific data and knowledge and thus to design new models of development." Mbon's analysis, according to Anyim underscores the importance of IT in development.

No wonder, the United Nations Organisation (UNO) listed eight indices that could lead or fuel MDGs by or before 2015. Six of these indices are anchored on Information and Communications Technology (ICTs). For instance, more than half of the global community should have access and indeed own a telephone by 2015, own or have access to Personal Computers (PC) by 2015 and undergo scientific discovery by that same year and to achieve these and several others that will bring about a better world, IT should serve as the conveyor belt.

But is Nigeria marching towards these goals? Anyim said yes and no. Hence the conference packaged by the NCS to ruminate on the way forward with the theme "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria: IT Strategies and Tools."

Anyim who chaired the opening ceremony explained that:

- "IT is an indispensable tool in every modern society;

- IT is not a form of technology but ability to make use of all technologies;
- IT create access to a whole range of data and knowledge and;
- IT can facilitate the designs of models of development." The former Senate president made bold to say "that IT has become indispensable in any meaningful research work, design projects, management of projects and programmes, comparative analysis, dissemination and access to information, data collection, security among others. Therefore, it is uncommon to imagine life without greater dependence on IT." Goal:
- Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty;
- achieve Universal Primary Education;
- promote gender equality and empower women;
- reduce child mortality;
- improve material health;
- combat HIV AIDs, malaria and other diseases;
- ensure environmental sustainability;
- develop a global partnership for development; These were expected to hit definite targets by 2015. We shall see in the cause of this conference that these goals would be a illusion without IT as its backbone. I am glad to inform you that the sub-themes for this conference are squarely focused on the MDGs targets. Some of the sub-themes are as follows:
- Enabling technologies for wealth creation;
- Bio medical and health information;
- Web-based learning;
- Women empowerment via IT;
- 3G and 4G Mobile Communication services as well as GIS;
- Environmental sustainability;
- Public/Private initiatives in emerging technologies and job creation using IT;

May I say at this juncture that this conference presents itself as one of the most IT strategic approaches for achieving the MDG. This is so because, this conference will highlight new developments in the areas covered by its

theme and how to deploy them in achieving MDGs.

A major tool of IT in achieving MDG goals is the establishment of National Information Technology Development Agency and the subsequent establishment of Nigerian Internet Registration Association to control the .ng domain.

I must also with considerable excitement commend the recent launch of Nigeria's Sat 2 with its attendant impact on IT and development in Nigeria. I must say that the main IT facilitating infrastructure has been laid by the establishment of the above agencies and ancillary programmes of the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology. I must as well say that much is yet to be done on developing the human resources required in this area. I make bold to suggest that much efforts should be made to improve on the local content and this would be better achieved through the appointment of IT professionals to lead relevant Government departments. Local entrepreneurs in the IT industry must be encouraged in order to achieve local domestication of Information Technology.

I have no doubt that this conference will squarely address all facets of the IT industry and its challenges and more so as it impacts on efforts towards achieving the MDGs.

Imo State Governor, Chief Ikedi Ohakim represented by his deputy towed the same line of thought with Anyim saying, Nigeria cannot afford to play lip service to the issues of rampaging poverty, hunger and starvation that are decimating sub-Saharan Africa.

Nigeria must link to the global community strategy to eradicate this spectre that serves to dehumanise our people but Ohakim equally said the rich nations should not be hypocritical about the affairs of Africans because "they (the so called rich nations of the world) cannot really claim to be rich in the face of pervasive poverty among more than 80 per cent of the global population. To be sure, poverty reduction is not an entirely new issue. Different nations have developed several concepts on how to fight the scourge."

The difference between wealth and poverty is information and since computers remain the main drivers for wealth creation and economic emancipation, Ohakim charged the NCS to live up to its billings by bringing succour to a beleaguered country constantly going broke.

"I note with much enthusiasm and satisfaction that member companies of your society have been making positive impact on the development of computer hardware and software as well as development of IT capacity and diffusion," Ohakim added. He particularly noted that Zinox Computers, Omatek, SpeedStar brands have displayed qualities that meet if not surpass international standards.

He said his government is already creating a data base for unemployed persons in the state "with a view to having the requisite information that would influence policy direction and provide timely and accurate information on available jobs here and there.

Former President, Information Technology Association of Nigeria (ITAN), Mr. Chris Uwaje said through he was excited about the prospects of

attaining the MDGs, "we cannot get it correctly if we do not have a wireless environment."

To achieve this, government and all stakeholders should create a wireless society through the deployment of WiMAX, WiFi and other wireless tools across the corners of the country, Uwaje submitted.

President, Nigeria Internet Group (NIG), Mr. Lanre Ajayi expressed great optimism that "we can attain it because it will be driven by IT professionals who will drive other sectors and propel them to action.

But he asked rather rhetorically. "Are we ready for this challenge?" President, Nigeria IT Professionals in the Americas (NITPA), Prof. Manny Aniebonam charged his audience and colleagues including his teammates, from NITPA that "we have had too much talk and too many conferences. This is the time for action if we truly want to form the global community.

He said Nigerians pay more for bandwidth than any other country in the world. He said, to bring about a change, we must all make concerted efforts to get the situation right.

He said, apart from repatriating billions of dollars to the country yearly from the Americas, "NITPA members want to repatriate their brains to develop Nigeria, because we want to see how the industry can grow."

President, National Association of Computer Science Students (NACOSS), Mr. Bayo Mohammed Onimode, Jr. expressed the fears of NACOSS and its over 80,000 members in 125 institutions of higher learning.

Onimode is worried about the current curriculum. He said that most graduating students are not equipped with modern tools that will enable them compete favourably with their counterpart elsewhere in the world.

He called for a speedy review of the curriculum in line with modern trends if capacity building is to be enhanced.

"Some of our teachers teach what they learnt in the 1980s and these are not in consonant with modern development," Onimode submitted.

To attain MDGs, we must train the students for future development since they will be the driving force for this growth," he added.

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