

Your Excellency, the President of Burkina Faso

Dear CEO of Microsoft in Africa

Messrs. Conference attendants

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very pleased to participate in the 2nd Edition of the African Forum on ICT Best Practices. I would like to express my gratitude to Microsoft and to the host country of this major event, in the person of Your Excellency, the President of the Republic Blaise Compaoré. Above all, there is very important meaning underlying this event, i.e., ICT have undergone an increasing and sustaining implementation and development in African societies. Therefore, on top of being pleased, I'm also proud because Angola and I, on its behalf, are participating in this Forum, which is indeed a promoter of that progress and a reference for ICT practices throughout the whole African continent.

Nowadays, the Information Technologies are not only a means of technological and scientific progress, but also a tool to bring Governments closer to their citizens. Their use is most of times a good way to evaluate the level of development of a country. I believe it is quite safe to say that the future of contemporary democracies will be greatly defined by the way the States will use the information technologies.

Digital democracy is discussed as the coming of an unavoidable reality. If, on the one hand, there are still uncertainties regarding the way this democracy will be implemented, on the other hand, future depends on it. This is indeed a challenge that African nations will have to embrace.

The dialogue of the Governments with its citizens is certainly the most important factor towards the health of a democracy, as it implies a larger involvement of the citizens, companies and the organisations in the political decisions of the States, ensuring governmental, economic and social stability, which are key issues towards the recovery of the economies and an improvement in the life standards of the African peoples.

In this context, Information Technologies play a primary role in constructing communication platforms, providing a faster relationship between the State and the Citizen, promoting a more direct dialogue with the companies and business partners.

But, we must admit also the existence of huge gaps in this field in Africa. The implementation of the ICT sector in our continent as a lever towards the development of public services is still in an initial phase. This should be faced not as a reason for grieving, but an incentive towards the creation of new solutions, for the implementation of innovative practices and, more than imitating experiences of other States, going beyond what has been accomplished so far. In fact, this current development phase, should also be seen as an opportunity to make way for innovation and the creation of new ICT practices.

Consequently, initiatives as the ICT Best Practices African Forum should be exalted and encouraged. Here, we will share here experiences and cases of success and will witness the presentation of ICT applications to electronic government, also called *e-government*. Moreover, opportunities will be created to establish contacts which may represent new partnerships. This is an issue worth practicing. Basically, I would like to point out the active collaboration enabled amongst the several States and companies of the sector, convinced of its success and believing in the maxim “to grow together, is to grow quicker and better”.

Thus, I convey my deepest wishes of great successes to this event, which I’m sure it will have, and I cannot help expressing my gratitude to Microsoft, for its initiative, which should be exalted and encouraged. I dare taking this opportunity to ask Microsoft, on behalf of all that feel the importance of these events, to keep investing in this area, which bring many benefits for the future of our Nations and Africa as a whole.

Now that I have spoken, I would like to introduce to you the Angolan viewpoint on this issue, showing some initiatives promoted by the Government of Angola within the

PROFESSOR PEDRO S. TETA (PhD)

Vice-Minister for Science and Technology
Coordinator of NCIT – National Committee for Information Technology

website: <http://www.pedroteta.org>
e-mail: pedro.teta@cnti.gov.ao

scope of the practical application of ICT to the services and Public Administration, as well as to present some economic indicators on our country.