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**THE PRESENT EFFECT OF TECNOLOGY ADVANCEMENT IN THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY**

Recognizing the seemingly insatiable appetite of consumers for phone services, and the potentials of the Nigerian market, investors pumped in $2.110 billion into the sector by December 2002, $2.55 billion by June 2003, and over $4.0 billion by March 2004. The initial investment was just US$50 million as at the end of 1999. This represents a percentage increase of over 8,000. Investment in the telecommunication sector ranks second only to the oil industry. Of all the applications of ICTs, the use of mobile phones is on the increase in most developing countries while internet usage is considered to rank next to phone usage, especially in Nigeria. Specifically, ICT has successfully aided the following sectors of the Nigerian economy: the Industrial/Manufacturing, Education, Transportation, Tourism, Health, Banking, Commerce, Agriculture, Government Services, Defense, Sports, and Rural Development.

ICTs played vital roles in the enumeration of the 2006 population census in Nigeria, and the successful hosting of the 15th National Sports Festival, 2006. The Network Providers in Nigeria has been devoting huge sums of money to support sports. E-voting is in the pipeline, with strong support from major stake holders, against the on-coming national election in 2007. It is expected that the Network Providers will soon devote their assistance towards research in the higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. The impacts of ICTs have been noted to influence the environment, employment, poverty alleviation, attraction of foreign funds, and empowerment for the disabled. The fastest growing employer of labor in Nigeria today is the telecom industry -- specifically the wireless telephone sector that provides services to individual customers using the GSM. The tele density (fixed and mobile lines) in Nigeria has jumped from 1 line to 440 persons in 1985 Technology 332 to 1 line for every 263 persons in 1997 and 1 to 18 in 2004. As at March, 2004, the sector created about 5,000 new direct jobs and 400,000 indirect new jobs. These appear in the form of the various ICT engineers, scientists, technicians, software developers, accountants, managers and clerks employed by the network operators, and individual small scale related activities. Table 1 shows a picture of how the introduction of ICTs has been able to generate employment at the grass-root. The average monthly profit from Table 1 is commensurate in the process of alleviating poverty since the Nigerian per capita income is about $320 - implying below US$1.00 per day – and $1.00 exchanges for about N140.00

**Current Challenges of ICT in Nigeria**

ICT which is the economic driver for most developed economy has been identified as the key player in economic/sustainable growth. The following are the challenges of ICT in Nigeria.

* Inadequate ICT policy enforcing the use/adoption of ICT driven services- there are no adequate rules in place to ensure the safe use/adoption of ICT services in the Nigerian State, while sectors like the banking sector fully adopt ICT in the execution of its services, other sectors are yet to fully adopt the use of ICT services in its service e.g. education and tourism sectors.
* High Cost of ICTs Equipment in Nigeria- the exorbitant cost of ICT equipment in Nigeria is a major challenge of ICT growth in Nigeria. The Federal Government of Nigeria(FGN) should has not adequately protected the ICT sector through price control and the ensuring the standardization of important ICT goods/services.

**E-Health and M-Health (ICT Health)**

ICT in Healthcare is powerful in monitoring the outbreak and spread of disease, disseminating health information about health-promoting and disease-preventing, training and long distance support to health care practitioners. E-Health is defined as the use of ICT in provision of health care services. This means ICT can be used in various health care functions such as clinical, educational, research and administrative regardless of geographical settings. M-Health (Mobile Health) extends the efficiency and accuracy of the already available health systems through the use of electronic devices such as PDAs and mobile telephone networks to improve functions of the health systems.

**Electronic Governance**

The questions that usually come to mind are: what is the role of Information Communication Technology in governance? Is government doing enough to empower her people through ICT? In Nigeria, many government agencies are now using websites to provide information on the activities of government. Today people of Nigeria can go to the internet and get any information they want. Jobs, contracts, and government activities are posted to websites for public knowledge. This has greatly improved productivity, thereby making the economy of Nigeria high. Nigerians can now ask questions about public issues, and make their views known to government. Therefore E-Government must be customer driven and services oriented, meeting the needs of citizens and improving the quality of life while the government should understand ICT and their implication to government and society at large.

**Employment Opportunities**

The use of ICT to bring new employment for youths and migrant workers has also given opportunity to develop new ideas in the technology via the education system, training facilities and affordable access to computers. In this way, youths have an opportunity to be self-employed, and they are exposed to entrepreneurship through the use of information and communication technology. The demand of technology is seen to be a reality in creating employment opportunity for young people, where the youths will show their interest and creativity in software applications, bio-engineering, digital media, and mobile applications, which will attract young people’s creativity. Social interactions through the use of information and communication technology will help reliable and creative business ideas in the next one to three years, so that they can respond more effectively in all aspects of learning needed, and to document the best information and communication technology practices among the youths for future benefit.

**E-Business and Services in Nigeria**

Doing the business online has emerged as a practice in Nigeria. Though the industry is in nascent stage but has shown tremendous potential over last few years especially after competitive growth in banking sector. The growing young, educated, and technology friendly population has contributed largely in growing trends of e-business in the country. Popular E-Commerce models Business to Business (B2B), Business to Customer (B2C) and Customer to Customer (C2C) are adopted by many Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as a growth strategy for their business. Similarly, public service innovations are also driven by Government to Government (G2G), Government to Citizen (G2C) and Government to Business (G2B) models.

**ICT in Education (E-Learning)**

ICTs are a potentially powerful tool for extending educational opportunities, both formal and non-formal, to previously underserved constituencies, scattered and rural populations, groups traditionally excluded from education due to cultural or social reasons such as ethnic minorities, girls and women, persons with disabilities, and the elderly, as well as all others who for reasons of cost or because of time constraints are unable to enroll on campus.

Some of the importance of E-learning to the country is:

1. Access to Remote Learning Resources
2. Evaluative Learning
3. Active Learning
4. Creative Learning
5. Collaborative Learning
6. Integrative Learning
7. Evaluative Learning

**ICT in Economic Development**

The economic growth of any nation is tied to its ability to expand productivity. ICTs have the capacity to increase productivity, that is, to create more cost-effective output with the same or less input. Wealth generation is increasingly closely tied to the capacity to add value using ICT products and services. The value of information and accumulated knowledge within developing countries is an important aspect of their future growth potential. Only a very few developing countries have succeeded in narrowing the development 'gap' by harnessing the production or use of ICTs to their development goals. These technologies do not offer a magic potion that can be expected to provide a cure for the sick, to prevent environmental degradation, or to create jobs. However, if these technologies can be combined with domestic and external human resources, they can be instrumental in achieving major changes in the organization of industrial activity and the conduct of everyday life.