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**INNOVATION IN ICT IN AFRICA:
REGULATION VS COMPETITION**

BY

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Introduction

- The benefits accruing from sector reform and opening up markets to private investment are now well known in Africa
- Today Africa is recognised as a region with the fastest growing mobile market
- The reality though is that this growth is urban centric
- To realise the full potential of ICT's there is a need for specific focus on rural connectivity

The Need

- Most country economies are agriculture based and hence extension of ICT`s to rural areas would improve productivity and livelihoods
- The level of competition currently available in many countries has served urban areas well. Now is time to create new opportunities
- The new technologies make investments in rural areas economically viable

UA Concepts

- **Availability** : possibility to obtain service in all inhabited parts of a country
- **Affordability** : everyone can pay what is charged for the service they need to use
- **Accessibility** : use the service on equitable terms, regardless of location, gender etc

Universal Targets will typically include:

- A public payphone for a specific size of community
- A minimum walking distance to a public payphone
- An Internet Point of Presence in every district
- A public internet cafe in every district

Targeted Groups

- Generally accepted that subsidies for Universal Access should be targeted
- Groups to be targeted could include:
 - Anyone with income too low to afford uninhibited private use
 - Elderly
 - Non elderly with disabilities or

Targeted Groups contnd

- Categories like : individuals, households.communities.institutions
- Each country decides on the categories to create

Funding Arrangements

- Donations and grants from development partners
- Money from the regulatory Agency
- Money appropriated by Parliament
- A Universal Access Fund levy on Operators

Conclusion

- As we move closer to the year 2015, the realisation of MDGs will be greatly accelerated through innovative policies that identify with the targets that have been set and Universal Access is one such area that needs addressing.