



ALLIANCE FOR AFFORDABLE INTERNET LAUNCHES TO STIMULATE GLOBAL POLICY REFORM TO LOWER ACCESS COSTS TO USERS

Global sponsors Google, Omidyar Network, UK DFID and USAID joined by a host of governments, tech companies and civil society organisations from developed and developing countries in launch of new initiative, backed by Web inventor Sir Tim Berners-Lee

October 7, 2013: Abuja, Nigeria & Washington DC, USA. Today, a diverse group of private and public sector players came together to launch the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI – www.a4ai.org), a coalition to lead policy and regulatory reform and spur action to drive down artificially high internet prices in developing countries. By advocating for open, competitive and innovative broadband markets, A4AI aims to help access prices fall to below 5% of monthly income worldwide, a target set by the UN Broadband Commission. Reaching this goal can help to connect the two-thirds of the world that is presently not connected to the internet (*source: ITU*) and make universal access a reality.

A4AI's 30+ members reach across boundaries of geography, industry, and organisation type and include governments, companies, and civil society organisations from both developed and developing countries. Members share a belief that that policy reform, underpinned by robust research and genuine knowledge-sharing, is one of the best ways to unlock rapid gains in internet penetration rates. The Alliance was initiated by the World Wide Web Foundation, and its honorary chairperson is Dr Bitange Ndemo, the immediate former Permanent Secretary of Kenya's Ministry of Information and Communications, who is widely regarded as the father of Broadband in Kenya.

A4AI has a strong focus on action and announced the following plans today at the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation's Annual Forum in Abuja, Nigeria, witnessed by communications ministers, policy makers and industry leaders from around the globe:

- The Alliance will begin in-country engagements with three to four States by the end of 2013, expanding to at least twelve countries by the end of 2015.
- Members have committed to a set of policy best practices (available on www.a4ai.org) that will guide advocacy work at the international level. Key policy levers to drive prices down include allowing innovative allocation of spectrum, promoting infrastructure sharing, and increasing transparency and public participation in regulatory decisions.
- A4AI will produce an annual 'Affordability Report', with the first edition being unveiled in December 2013.



Commenting, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the Web and founder of the World Wide Web Foundation said:

“The reason for the Alliance is simple – the majority of the world’s people are still not online, usually because they can’t afford to be. In Mozambique, for example, a recent study showed that using just 1GB of data can cost well over two months’ wages for the average citizen.

“The result of high prices is a digital divide that slows progress in vital areas such as health, education and science. Yet with the advent of affordable smartphones, new undersea cables and innovations in wireless spectrum usage, there is simply no good reason for the digital divide to continue. The real bottleneck now is anti-competitive policies that keep prices unaffordable. The Alliance is about removing that barrier and helping as many as possible get online at reasonable cost.”

Dr Bitange Ndemo, honorary chairperson of A4AI, added:

“In Kenya, we saw the number of internet users more than double in a single year after we liberalised markets. Now we need to spark the same revolution on broadband costs and access, not only in my country but around the world. To achieve this, we will use our combined voices, leadership and expertise to press for fair, competitive and socially responsible markets.”

Quotes from Global Sponsors of A4AIz

Rt Hon Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for International Development (UK) said:

“Over the last twenty years the Web has changed our own society so much that everyday life seems unimaginable without it. Internet access has been a driver of economic growth. It puts power in the hands of people and opens up societies. Yet for millions of people across the world high prices still put it out of reach.

“This new alliance will challenge the anti-competitive regulations and policies that push up prices across the developing world, helping to bring universal Internet access to the world’s poorest people.”

Jennifer Haroon, Access Principal at Google, said:

“Nearly two out of every three people don’t have access to the Internet – this is a massive challenge that can’t easily be solved by a single solution or player. The world needs technical innovation and vision to bring more people online, but we also need a strong policy foundation that allows new ideas to flourish. By working alongside Alliance partners, we can help lay the



groundwork needed to drive innovation and bring the power of the Internet to more people."

Ory Okolloh, director of investments, Omidyar Network, added:

"The lack of affordable internet access in emerging markets is a key barrier to large-scale innovation, which in turn stifles social and economic advancement. Omidyar Network is delighted to help lead the formation of the Alliance for Affordable Internet to address this problem. The Alliance has the potential to help millions of people in the developing world come online, unlocking opportunities for them to access information and services that can meaningfully improve their lives."

Dr. Rajiv Shah, administrator of USAID said:

"The growing digital divide is a global issue that can only be tackled collaboratively, and we are thrilled to be working with the diverse and committed group of the Alliance for Affordable Internet to enable even the most remote and impoverished communities to access the wealth of knowledge and connection that exists in the digital world."

Professor Tim Unwin, Secretary General, Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation:

"In a world where information sharing and communication is increasingly dominated by the internet, it is essential that everyone should have access to it at prices they can afford. The rapid expansion of all types of ICTs is nevertheless currently leading to ever-greater inequalities in the world, and so the creation of the Alliance for Affordable Internet is timely and important. By working together in carefully crafted partnerships, we can seek to redress this balance and turn rhetoric into reality."



Full List of Alliance Members

Global Sponsors*	Private Sector	Public Sector and Academia	Civil Society and Foundations
Google Inc	Alcatel-Lucent	Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation	Association for Progressive Communications (APC)
Omidyar Network	Cisco	Center for Technology and Society of the Getulio Vargas Foundation (CTS/FGV)	Cherie Blair Foundation for Women
UK Department for International Development	Digicel	Dialogo Regional sobre Sociedad de la Informacion (DIRSI)	Consumers International
USAID	Ericsson	Government of Sweden	Ford Foundation
	Facebook	US State Department	Global Partners
	Intel Corporation		Grameen Foundation
	Main One		Internet Society
	Microsoft Corp.		Inveneo
	Yahoo!		IREX/Beyond Access
			New America Foundation's Open Technology Institute (OTI)
			Research ICT Africa
			Software & Information Industries Association
			The Centre for Internet & Society
			Women in Global Science and Technology

**Global Sponsors are founder members of A4AI who contribute significant financial and practical support.*



ENDS

Photographs and interviews available on request.

Further Information

Affordability Facts and Figures

(All from ITU report released March 2013 entitled ICT Facts and Figures 2013 unless otherwise cited)

- In the developing world, 31% of the population is online, compared with 77% in the developed world.
- 90% of the 1.1 billion households not connected to the Internet are in the developing world.
- In Africa, 16% of people are using the Internet – only half the penetration rate of Asia and the Pacific.
- Between 2009 and 2013, Internet penetration in households has grown fastest in Africa, with annual growth of 27%, followed by 15% annual growth in Asia and the Pacific, the Arab States and the CIS.
- The gender gap is more pronounced in the developing world, where 16% fewer women than men use the Internet, compared with only 2% fewer women than men in the developed world. A recent report from Intel entitled ‘Women and the Web’ suggests that women are 43% less likely to have access to the internet in sub-Saharan Africa, 33% in South Asia, and 34% in Middle East and North Africa.
- In Africa, less than 10% of fixed (wired) broadband subscriptions offer speeds of at least 2 Mbit/s. This is also the case of several countries in Asia and the Pacific, the Americas and some Arab States.
- Over the past five years, fixed-broadband prices as a share of GNI per capita dropped by 82%. By 2012, fixed-broadband prices represented 1.7% of monthly GNI p.c. in developed countries. In developing countries, fixed-broadband services remain expensive, accounting for 30.1% of average monthly incomes.

Notes to Editors

The Alliance for Affordable Internet (www.a4ai.org) is a global coalition committed to driving down the cost of internet access in less developed countries.

A4AI focuses on creating the conditions for open, efficient and competitive broadband markets via policy and regulatory reform. Through



a combination of advocacy, research and knowledge-sharing, the Alliance aims to facilitate the achievement of the UN Broadband Commission target of entry-level broadband services priced at less than 5% of average monthly income. In doing so, A4AI will help to connect the two-thirds of people in developing countries who cannot access the internet.

A4AI members are drawn from both developed and less developed countries and include public, private and not-for-profit organizations. The World Wide Web Foundation, founded by Web inventor Sir Tim Berners-Lee, initiated the Alliance. Global sponsors are Google, Omidyar Network, USAID and the UK DFID and the Alliance has more than 30 members.

For more, please visit: www.a4ai.org.