



Press Release

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Leaders Gather In Drive For Affordable Internet in Mozambique

- *Government leaders, policy makers, and technology industry players gather today in Maputo to develop policy recommendations that will drive down the cost of Internet access in Mozambique*
- *Mozambique is the first SADC country to be working with the Alliance for Affordable Internet - the world's broadest technology sector coalition*

Maputo, Mozambique. Affordable access to the Internet will spark innovation in vital areas such as agriculture, health and education that will vastly improve the lives of ordinary Mozambican citizens. That is the message today as leaders from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors gather at the first Mozambican country forum organised by the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI). Attendees include the Honourable Minister Mr. Gabriel Muthisse (Ministry of Transport and Communication), as well as representatives from Instituto Nacional das Comunicações de Moçambique (INCM), Maputo's Science Innovation and ICT Research Institute (SIITRI), Vodacom, Internet Solutions, IREX, UK DFID and USAID.

The insight and experience of these attendees - and other senior figures from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors - will be harnessed as they discuss and debate concrete policy areas that can reduce the cost of Internet access. Thereafter, they will work to form a national coalition and hammer out a plan of action for reducing the cost of access in Mozambique. Guided by the global experience of its 60+ members - which include the likes of Cisco, Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Omidyar Network and Yahoo - and international best practice, A4AI will then work alongside the national coalition to support the development and implementation of the changes needed to make affordable broadband access for all a reality.

Today, less than five percent of Mozambicans use the Internet (Source: ITU 2013). This is largely due to cost - while the country ranks as the world's 15th poorest, the price of a fixed broadband connection ranks as the world's fourth most expensive, and a basic mobile broadband subscription costs over 65% of average monthly income. Recognising the transformative potential of the Internet, the Mozambican government recently became the third country to join A4AI, signing a formal memorandum of understanding with the Alliance in April. Mozambique is the first SADC nation to become an Alliance member, and joins Ghana and Nigeria in publicly committing to develop and implement key policy and regulatory changes designed to force down the cost of Internet access for all.



The Honourable Minister of Transport and Communications, Mr Gabriel Muthisse said:

“The Ministry of Transport and Communications is pleased to welcome the first A4AI Forum in Maputo, Mozambique. While the country is experiencing staggering economic growth and internet penetration rates continue to rise, the number of citizens using the Internet is still below desired levels.

“To address this, the government is undertaking a series of regulatory reforms to boost development and access to telecommunications services, information technology and internet through the ongoing revision of the Telecommunications Act and the Telecommunications Strategy. We intend to accelerate this process by engaging all stakeholders at national and international levels in the development and implementation of a national broadband strategy sector. We hope that this forum - as well as the subsequent events of this Alliance - serves as fertile ground for inclusive discussions to ensure an affordable Internet for all.”

Dr Americo Muchango, Director General of the INCM, the Mozambican Communications Regulatory Authority, added:

“Access to and use of the Internet is not a privilege that should be reserved for a few Mozambicans. Instead, all citizens should be able to access the Internet. As the regulator, we have a responsibility to ensure the availability of this service at an affordable cost to all. As such we must, through this forum and this Alliance, bring together our best thinkers and identify viable solutions to ensure that all Mozambicans enjoy the benefits of the Internet.”

Sonia Jorge, the Executive Director of the Alliance for Affordable Internet said:

“Today’s meeting in Maputo is an important step on Mozambique’s march toward universal access. By starting this process of open dialogue between the government, the private sector, and the range of other in-country stakeholders, Mozambicans will have the opportunity to work together to implement the regulatory changes needed to ensure a more affordable and accessible Internet for all. We are excited to embark on this journey together with the newly-formed Mozambican national coalition of A4AI, and are confident that increased access to affordable broadband will have positive effects for citizens across the country.’

Prof. Dr. Eng. Venancio Simao Massingue, Founder of SIITRI and former Minister of Science and Technology, Mozambique, said:

“I hope that one day Internet access will be like oxygen - freely available across all corners of our country. Today’s meeting should be a milestone on this journey - a day where we can generate creative ideas and a road map to bring affordable Internet access to all our citizens, regardless of geographic location or socio-economic standing. This will require deep commitment and a shift in mindset from all stakeholders. Those who operate businesses in the ICT sector should challenge themselves to build models that increase returns as demand grows and communities make greater and greater use of the Internet.”

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Photographs and interviews available on request.

Notes to Editors

1) The [Alliance for Affordable Internet](http://www.a4ai.org) (A4AI) 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](http://www.worldwideweb.org), 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 50 members.

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