

NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS & ICT POLICY

Ministry of Posts & Telecommunications

2010 - 2015

ilabLiberia



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

*Liberia's Vision and Policy to Utilize Information and Communication
Technology for Economic Development*

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Just about everyone in the general business community, our development partners, and our private sector are working and other programs depend on ICT. I bring you greetings. Today, with the support of the Cabinet and the collective inputs of stakeholders in the ICT sector I am pleased to adopt the National ICT and Telecommunications Policy of Liberia. The policy seeks to drive the holistic development of the sector over the next five years. While Government is responsible to implement the policy, one of our strategies is to collaborate with the private sector in providing some of the basic services to our people through an enabling environment. Our country has lagged behind over the years in terms of not embracing the opportunities that ICT provides. The urge is to empower the private sector, the commitment to transform public entities and our desire to support other institutions has been a priority in this policy. We are convinced that the programs that constitute this policy can contribute to our national reconstruction process through optimizing technologies.

We all know that technology is a powerful tool, but just a tool. Its efficacy lies in its ability to accomplish the will of man and society at a level of efficiency, speed, and economy of scale so that we can create products and services, and reach more people over great distances, all exponentially, at more affordable cost to those who need them most. Our Government identifies ICT as a solution-based tool. Essentially, putting in place the appropriate policy, legal and regulatory framework, and creating the enabling environment in governing the sector will better prepare us in using this tool.

I let me thank the National Steering Committee for translating our vision into programs that serve all sectors - private, government, health, education and the communities. The National ICT and Telecommunications Policy is a strategic document that aligns our Priority Production Strategy with the Millennium Development Goals and the goals of the World Summit on Information Society as well as with the ECOWAS ICT Supplementary Acts. Our vision is for Liberia to become a globally competitive knowledge and information society where lasting improvement in social, economic, and cultural development is achieved through effective use of ICT. We want to make Government services transparent, increase economic diversification and foreign investment. We want to promote access to relevant, localized and understandable information for all citizens. This is what this document is about.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
President, Republic of Liberia

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PART I INTRODUCTION

This document presents the Government of Liberia's Policy for the Telecommunications and Information Communications Technology (ICT) sector. The Government of Liberia (GOL) understands the important role that telecommunications and ICT play in the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) policy, which is built on the following four pillars:

- i. Enhancing National Security
- ii. Strengthening Governance & Rule of Law
- iii. Revitalizing the Economy
- iv. Rehabilitating Infrastructure and Delivering Basic Services

Liberia's ability to accelerate its economic development process, gain global competitiveness and improve the well-being of its people depends on the extent to which it can develop, use, and sell telecommunications and ICT services in one form or another.

The goal is to integrate telecommunications and ICT services into overall developmental objectives, priorities, and programs. Our school systems, health programs, commercial, national security and government programs including procurement activities shall be transformed using ICT as the effective platform to ensure transparency, efficiency and productivity. ICT shall facilitate the outcomes of the National PRS objectives to accelerate economic growth for sustainable national development.

The GOL has embarked on setting a national agenda that involves the telecommunications and ICT sectors to better the lives of its citizens and alleviate poverty through inducing economic activities, improving educational systems and ensuring that citizens are stakeholders in the national policy agenda. This document outlines the strategies to continue liberalization of the telecommunications sector and establish ICT partnerships as a means to improve services delivery and open up new opportunities.

The Telecommunications ACT of 2007 redefined the functions and responsibilities of government agencies including the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, the Liberia Telecommunications Authority and the designated National Operator. High level issues of policy-making, regulation enforcements, liberalization, fair competition, universal access, national security and standardization, to name a few, are addressed.

The national ICT Policy is to ensure that services and systems are people-centered, universally accessible and cost-effective. The government's role is to establish a legal regulatory framework and institutional mechanisms to guide the activities of all stakeholders.

In summary, these policies are intended to achieve the modernization and rapid expansion of the telecommunications network and communication systems. The goals are to increase productivity, enhance information sharing, and become global stakeholders in the telecommunications and ICT environment.

The dynamic nature of modern technology in telecommunications and ICT makes it compelling to periodically review and set new policy guidelines. The policy objective shall be set for five years (2010-2015) in support of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) target to connect the world by 2015, of which the government's PRS makes up the first two years.