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Contribution by

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WHAT DO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES NEED IN ORDER TO BUILD COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES THROUGH E-COMMERCE AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY?

a. Street Addressing Systems

Street naming and addressing system are still at nascent stages in Ghana. Most streets in the country do not have names and those with names are rarely utilised as addressing or directional tools. The Government of Ghana in 2010 developed the operational guidelines to assist Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to manage the processes for establishing a coherent Street Addressing System. The Government was of the view that the successful implementation of this system will provide location addresses to promote operations of businesses and an addressing platform to facilitate other government initiatives such as the National Identification Exercise and National Population and Housing Census.

Notwithstanding the difficulties in the implementation of the project, citizens are now deriving benefits from this initiative. It has led to the introduction of new online services particularly within the transport sector. Examples include the introduction of Uber and the Black Ride services in the country which run on the GIS database. Currently, citizen are able to request for service with an estimated fare to their specific destinations.

The Government of Ghana have also launched the National Digital Property Addressing System (Asaase GPS App), which will provide every Ghanaian with a unique permanent digital address linked to postcodes.

b. National Identification Systems

The national identification systems helps countries to identify their citizens through the issuing of national identity card and citizen numbers to each citizen. The lack of well-established identification systems pose a challenge and a threat to the development of e-commerce. This is because government and businesses will have no means of authenticating the identity of customers and citizens.

In 2003, the Government of Ghana recognising the importance of National ID set up the National Identification Authority (NIA), to facilitate the implementation of a national identification system in the country.

In order to ensure full implementation of the process, the Government also formulate laws and policies such as the NIA Act, 2006 (Act 707) in 2006 and the National Identity Register Act, 2008 (Act 750) to give necessary legal premises for the operation and implementation of the system.

In 2014, the Government of Ghana with collaboration from the World Bank, launched the e-Transform project. The development objective of the e-Transform Ghana Project is expected to be achieved through interventions. The interventions include unique electronic identification systems, that validate citizens and confirms rights to public services while promoting better access to online transactions, financial and other services; and innovative applications to improve service delivery in the priority areas of health, education, judicial, and parliamentary services.

Out of the total funding of US$97 million for the project, a total of US$25million was allocated towards the development and enhancement of the National ID systems. In September, 2017 the new national ID card (Ghana card) has been outdoored. This signify the readiness of a national identification system within the country for businesses and citizens to rely on.

c. Payment Systems and Financial Inclusion

Most developed countries can boast of well-developed and reliable card payment systems to support e-commerce transactions. However, in most developing countries such as Ghana, e-commerce is driven largely by mobile phone related transaction other than credit or debit cards. This is due to relatively low penetration of card payment systems. Mobile phone penetration on the contrary is in excess of 136% as at end of 2016.

The introduction of SIM Card Registration Regulations 2011 paved way for the development of mobile money services within the country. As at the end of 2016, four mobile network operators (Airtel, MTN, Vodafone, and Tigo) offer mobile money services with an approximate 550 million volume of transactions representing an increase of 107 percent

from 266 million in 2015. Correspondingly, transaction values has also increase from 34 billion in 2015 to 78 billion Ghana cedi in 2016 (121% increase). Table 1 gives a summary statistics on mobile money development in Ghana.

Table 1: Mobile Money Service

Indicators	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total number of mobile voice subscriptions	25,618,427	28,026,482	30,360,771	35,008,387	38,305,078
Registered mobile money customers (cumulative)	3,778,374	4,393,721	7,167,542	13,120,367	19,735,098
Active mobile money customers	345,434	991,780	2,526,588	4,868,569	8,313,283
Registered Agents (Cumulative)	8,660	17,492	26,889	79,747	136,769
Active Agents	5,900	10,404	20,722	56,270	107,415
Total volume of transactions	18,042,241	40,853,559	113,179,738	266,246,537	550,218,427
Total value of transactions	594.12	2,652.47	12,123.89	35,444.38	78,508.90
Balanced on Float	19.59	62.82	223.33	547.96	1,257.40

Source: Bank of Ghana

d. Support for local application developers (Incubator Centres)

The Government of Ghana through its e-Transform project has built an incubator centre in Kumasi to provide training and facilities to app developers to enable the development of software application that meet local needs. This centre has over the years provided support to more than 20 entrepreneurs. The main aim of this project is to build capacity towards the uptake of e-commerce and the creation of ICT jobs in the country.

e. Commitment from Government towards bridging infrastructure and the digital divide gap

The government of Ghana through its agency, Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC) has initiated a Rural Telephony Project to ensure that underserved communities have access to communication needs. The objective of the project is to reduce the cost of deployment of infrastructures borne by operators by providing tower infrastructure on which the operators can collocate within this areas.

Additionally, 21 new enhanced community information centres as at the end of 2016 were built within deprived communities to provide the citizenry a point to access online services. These centres are also to provide basic ICT training to the students within the communities. The government has also, under the eastern corridor project, deployed 800km fibre optics cables to link the south (Ho) and the north (Bawku). These will enable communities along the Eastern corridors of the country have access to a high-speed internet broadband access.

WHAT CAN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES DO IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN THEIR PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE?

a. Legal framework

The first and most important indicator of cyber readiness is the articulation and publication of a National Cyber Security Strategy. Ghana's Cyber Security Strategy and Policy was approved by cabinet in 2016 with a vision to ensure a secure and connected Ghana with internet users working and creating worth in a safe cyber space.

The Policy also recommended the setting of a National Computer Security Incidence Response Teams (CSIRTs) or Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs). CERTs will have the responsibility to manage incidence response in event of natural or man-made cyber related disasters.

Ghana's CERT was established in 2013 with a tasked to coordinated cyber incidence response activities and implementing measures to reduce cyber risks. The implementation of this measures has promoted to a large extend trust of the internet as citizen are provided with relevant information on cyber attach outbreak. For example, CERTs provided information to citizens and businesses to prevent attach of the ransomware that broke out in 2017.

HOW CAN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES PARTNER WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, IN THE MOST IMPACTFUL WAY, TO MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES AND ADDRESS CHALLENGES RELATING TO E-COMMERCE AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY?

b. Capacity building, infrastructure and financial support

Developed countries must partner with developing countries in building capacity of law enforcement agencies and officers towards the enhancement of citizens and businesses trust in the internet. This has the potential to promote the update of e-commerce and digital economy within the developing countries.

For example, though Ghana has amended its Electronic Transaction Act to allow for investigation and prosecution of online fraud cases, it has only one specialized Unit of the Ghana Police Service that investigates cybercrime cases which is centralised in the Capital city (Accra). Due to lack of human resource in the area of cybercrime, other units across the country has not been formed/opened.

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