Forum: General Assembly

Issue: Providing free access to universal internet

Student Officer: Patricia Makura

Position: Chair

Introduction

The main reason why providing access to universal internet is because of its benefits.Not only does it aid with better and faster communication ,it will also aid with economic development due to the various areas of infrastructure that can be developed more efficiently due to the vast amount of research that will be available at hand.This increase in infrastructure will further enhance economic development due to the increased availability of jobs that will prevail.The obvious practical proof of this is the economic disparities that are shown between internet rich countries and those that do not have as much access to the internet.Additionally universal internet access is important socially due to the many developments that can stem from this.A new portal of education will be open empowering and equipping the younger generation with the information that they need in order to sustain themselves in upcoming years with regards to issues such as climate change and overpopulation as well as making medical advances that will increase mortality due to faster research and development.The main issues such as lack of development in LDCs that stand in the way of providing free access to universal internet are discussed in the following report as well as possible solutions to combat the issue.

Definition of Key Terms

Internet Universality

Internet access that is based on human rights, open, accessible to all and nurtured by Multi-stake holder participation

Countries and organizations involved

ITU

This is a United Nations organization that is responsible for Informations and Communications Technology ,it works diligently in achieving Target 9.C of the Sustainable development goals through research that groups developing countries into three sections that act as guidelines of where governments should steer their focus and investments in order to achieve universal internet access.

A4AI

The Alliance for affordable internet is a coalition of various organizations that aims to achieve universal internet access through the sharing of research in order to provide affordable internet throughout the whole globe

General Overview:

In 2015 ,193 member states of the United Nations were in agreement of the fact that for global development goal which states that ,'it is absolutely crucial that everyone everywhere should have Internet access'.This is a goal that was meant to be achieved by 2020 ,however at the current rate as which the situation is progressing least developed countries will only achieve this by 2042.This is alarming simply because of the fact that mobile broadband is the fastest growing technology in human history and despite this it will still take over two more decades for the whole world to have internet access.

The issue is an urgent one as universal internet access will be able to boost social and economical development .The economic aspect is especially highlighted by the American National Telecommunications and Information Administration whose studies show that an increase

of internet access across the board will bring forth a 21 billion increase in the annual economic output of the country .

Not only will universal internet access bring forth economic prosperity it will also help to bring improvements to the social well being of the human population through namely education but other examples are through the health sector and by providing a larger number and variety of careers available.

The main obstacles in the way of providing free access to universal internet lie is LDCs namely because these areas have large underdeveloped rural populations.50% of these populations live below the poverty line with 28% of these being illiterate and yet mostly everyone connected to the internet can read and write. It is the responsibility of their governments to invest in the infrastructure that will boost the quality of life for their rural populations with valuable additions such as electricity.With empowerment of this nature an output from the investment can be expected and this in turn can be used to provide the populations with internet access.

Further possible solutions lie in combatting the issue of affordability.This is a reflection of poor economic circumstances and lack of necessary infrastructure .It is estimated that between 1,2 billion and 2,8billion people cannot get online through mobile networks because they do not live within sufficient mobile network coverage .Areas where these people are affected are the areas whereby due to the fact that there is a lack of infrastructure, mobile network operators are forced to increase costs in order to extend coverage.

 Apart from the aforementioned, user capability is also a major hindrance in providing universal access to internet.This issue of user capabilities lies in digital illiteracy which is a direct product of language literacy which reflects a deprived education system. Collaboration of governments, non governmental organizations, service providers and device manufacturers will be useful in tackling this particular aspects of the topic at hand .

Previous approaches to solving the issue

IPoA: This program of action was set for the development of LDCS during the 2011-2020 decade with technological advancement being highlighted as a key deliverable

UN Broadband Commission for digital development: As of 2018 Target 2025 was set to expand broadband infrastructure as well as use and access to the global population to support SDG goals set by the UN.

Bibliography

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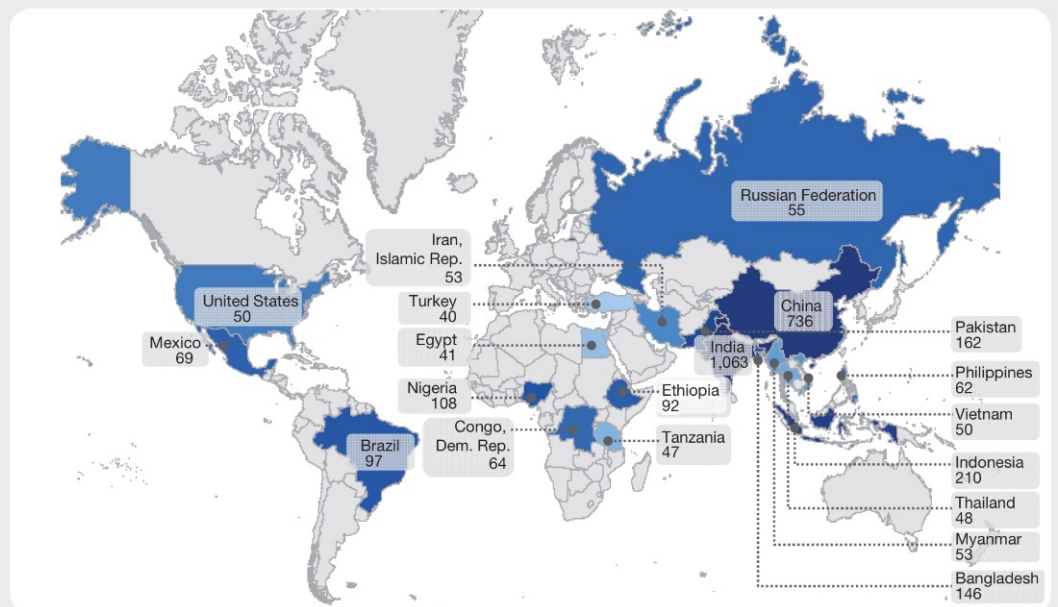Seiberlich, Meredith ,'*Broadband or bust',* MillenialAction, October 2015,Web.13 February 2018

Appendix

20 countries account for 3.2 billion offline individuals, ~75% of the 4.4 billion non-Internet users worldwide

Size of offline population, 2013
Millions

0   1,200

Russian Federation
55

Iran, Islamic Rep.
53

Turkey
40

United States
50

China
736

Pakistan
162

Mexico
69

Egypt
41

India
1,063

Philippines
62

Nigeria
108

Ethiopia
92

Vietnam
50

Congo, Dem. Rep.
64

Tanzania
47

Indonesia
210

Brazil
97

Thailand
48

Myanmar
53

Bangladesh
146

Internet Barriers Index

Maximum score of 100
Low score indicates high barriers, high score indicates low barriers

Top quartile | Second quartile
Third quartile | Bottom quartile

Country	Incentives	Low incomes and affordability	User capability	Infrastructure	Internet Barriers Index score
United States	100	93	99	85	94
Germany	72	100	99	100	93
South Korea	91	89	97	94	93
Japan	79	88	99	92	90
Spain	66	91	97	80	84
Italy	40	88	99	87	78
Russia	30	84	100	61	69
Turkey	40	67	91	57	64
Thailand	37	79	90	48	63
Mexico	49	67	90	41	62
China	28	81	92	43	61
Sri Lanka	38	74	86	45	61
Brazil	42	64	85	53	61
South Africa	38	62	89	49	59
Colombia	46	60	90	39	59
Philippines	35	65	93	35	57
Indonesia	29	79	89	30	57
Vietnam	29	69	90	34	55
Egypt	38	79	57	35	52
India	38	65	39	19	40
Nigeria	33	49	37	5	31
Pakistan	21	63	29	10	30
Bangladesh	29	45	31	5	28
Tanzania	13	27	47	0	22
Ethiopia	0	0	0	5	1

Low barriers

High barriers

Source: *McKinsey and Company analysis*

2000

2015*

400 MILLION INTERNET USERS

3.2 BILLION INTERNET USERS

Developed countries

Developed countries

Developing countries   LDCs

Developing countries   LDCs

100 million people
(rounded values)   Online   Offline