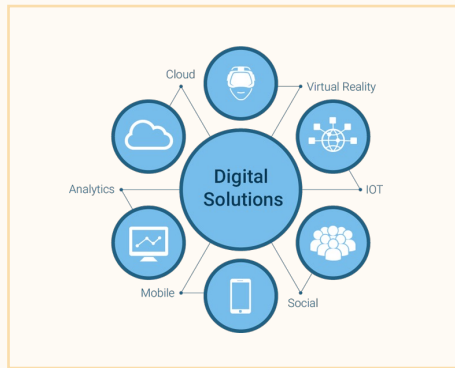


Banking on Science, Technology and Innovation: Future-proofing ICPD

Introduction

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is characterized by cutting-edge technologies that include robotics, the Internet of Things (IoT), 3D and 4D printing, big data and Artificial Intelligence (AI) – a conglomeration of ideas, innovations and technological interactions. Global use of digital technology has grown exponentially since 1994 ICPD in Egypt leading to enhanced innovations that promote the fast tracking of implementation of the Programme of Action (PoA).



Situation: Digital Superhighway Pillar in BETA

National Council for Population and Development

<p>Mobile Phone Use Global: 5.61 billion Kenya: 66.04 million</p>	<p>Internet Use Global: 5.04 billion Kenya: 13.05 million</p>	<p>Social Media Use Global: 5.35 billion Kenya: 22.7 million</p>
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Quality Life for All Kenyans

<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital2024-kenya>

Achievements

Digital technology and innovation have proliferated socio-economic development in a significant way. Internet usage is over 90% in developed countries. In Africa, internet use rose by 115% between 2019 and 2021 and at the start of 2024 Kenya's internet usage almost doubled (from 22% in 2022 to 40.08%). So far, Kenya has made over 16,000 government services accessible on e-citizen - an e-government platform.

Kenya has embraced the digital technology from the highest echelons of government, where it forms one pillar of the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda and is well placed in the Fourth Medium-Term Plan (MTP IV 2023-2027) with a Kenya National Digital Master Plan (2022-2032) to drive technology. This indicates a high-level prioritization of technological uptake despite challenges related to inequality, cybersecurity, and inadequate policy and investments in infrastructure and human capital. In 2023, Kenya enacted laws on digital health

Digital technology is critical for future proofing the ICPD PoA, especially in advancing equality, inclusion, advocacy, sensitization, decision-making, policy and interventions in sexual reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence elimination and empowerment. Education, health, energy, environment and climate science, manufacturing, industry and marketing, transport, agriculture, finance and social development are some of the sectors that have greatly benefited from technological advancements in Kenya.

Existing Gaps

Despite progress made, Kenya still faces the imminent problem of inadequate digital literacy and skilled workforce to drive the digital agenda. Universal access to internet connectivity is yet to be attained given

the poor infrastructure in rural and hard to reach areas while cybersecurity remains inadequate. Gender disparities exist, with more women than men likely to lack access to digital technology.

Recommendations

In order to benefit from digital transformation and technological innovation, the government, technology companies, private sector, academia, civil society and communities must work together to increase knowledge and enhance digital technology business models that improve livelihoods

Increasing access to information and services is paramount, therefore, the government and private sector need to enhance investments in provision of digital infrastructure, skills, a skilled workforce and innovations. These have the potential to increase efficiency, effectiveness and high productivity thus bolstering socio-economic development and achievement of the goals of ICPD PoA.

Government, the private sector and development partners need to strategically invest in digital technology to enhance access to health information and services, improve education and water and sanitation to the last mile (leaving no one behind) thereby enhancing equitable socio-economic growth across counties and country thus achieving the ICPD agenda.

Government needs to improve the legal framework to strengthen equity and ethical considerations that protect individual rights and safety through establishment of laws that govern use of technology especially for prevention of technology-based GBV.

The government needs to explore more opportunities for investing in digital technology for the attainment of ICPD PoA.