- Session Title: Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion- CENB III

- Date: December 18

- Time: 10:40-12:10

- Session Organizer: Mili Semlani

- Chair/Moderator: Raquel Gatto

- Rapporteur/Notetaker: Mili Semlani

- List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations:
Constance Bommelar (ISOC), Professor Christopher Yoo (University of Pennsylvania), Olga Cavalli (ISOC Argentina), Jac Sm Kee (APC), Cheryl Miller (Verizon), Robert Pepper (Facebook), Ezekeil Tari (Telemedicine Project Vanuatu), Andrea (The Makaya Project), Danial Page (Nasco), Usman Omar (Nasco), Unidentified speaker (Give One Project Gambia)

- Key Issues raised (1 sentence per issue):
The session was a presentation for the on going work on Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion. The session aimed to invite views and initiatives from the experts and community at large. So in addition to providing an update on the study and its findings, the session gave a platform to various speakers leading ICT infrastructure development projects or addressing SDGs via ICT across the globe.

- If there were presentations during the session, please provide a 1-paragraph summary for each presentation:
Professor Christopher Yoo used a presentation to summarise the work of CENB in the past two years, bringing out the challenges and solutions. It also highlighted the need for the third phase.

Nasco from Ghana used a video to give a short introduction to their work in Ghana with respect to digital empowerment, education and ICT for socio economic development.

The Makaya Project used a video (in Spanish) to show their work in expanding access in rural areas in Columbia via schools, libraries and how that has changed the lives of the people in the project areas.

- Please describe the Discussions that took place during the workshop session (3 paragraphs):
The session began with a brief background of the CENB and why it was started. It delved into the Tunis agenda and role of ISOC in initiating the study. Professor Christopher Yoo

then went on to explain the need for phase 3 of CENB and stressed on the need for intersessional work - and whybringing in on-ground initiatives was important.

Phase 1 looked at the policy challenges, phase 2 was localised and probed into issues that restricted access whereas phase 3 this years looks more at real action or work at the ground level case studies. CENB Phase III talks to three SDG goals namely: Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning, Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

Olga stressed on the importance of ICT education. Eg in Latin America a lot of students don't complete education, which makes them lesser economic independent. She urged the need to train young people in ICT, tech programming, etc done by public and private sector partnerships.

Cheryl Miller and Robert Pepper shared visions of tech giants like Verizon and Facebook respectively in facilitating connectivity and inclusivity. The Verizon foundation is developing partnerships with other nonprofits and be more proactive beyond simply providing funding.

Speakers from various ground level projects discussed the issues faced by their communities and how their ICT development projects were helping and enabling their societies. Ezekeil Tari from Vanuatu spoke of the use and growth of telemedicine facilitated by internet, especially relevant to the faraway islands in the Pacific. Nasco of Ghana is supporting 8000 students so far and they aim to reach 9 million young students by institutionalising 1500 ICT enabled classrooms in the country. The team from gambia showed how digital literacy for girls had enabled voting in Gambia and helped in bringing about social change.

- Please describe any Participant suggestions regarding the way forward/ potential next steps /key
Realising and recognizing all the on ground work put in by various people and organisation was the key message of the session. The multiple discussions and this platform to allow some of them to come all the way to present their work was indeed seen as an impetus to encourage more such initiatives in order to increase access and connect the next billion.

It was recorded that while it is vital to consolidate policy challenges it is also important to look at it the other way around: See what has been done and how policies need to act as a catalyst for such work instead of hindering their growth.

It was important to encourage more of such sharing and similar initiatives like the One World Connected Project at the University of Pennsylvania that has now connected 120 such case studies of different kinds, to strengthen the voice of the community level projects and bring out the real issues and their solutions.

Gender Reporting

- Estimate the overall number of the participants present at the session: 29

- Estimate the overall number of women present at the session: 8-10

- To what extent did the session discuss gender equality and/or women's empowerment?
The session had one group who shared their work focussed on digital empowerment of young girls in Gambia. Another important gender discussion was led by Jac Kee who shared her experience and inputs in the ICT challenges faced by women across various sub groups.

- If the session addressed issues related to gender equality and/or women's empowerment, please provide a brief summary of the discussion:

ICT for women, equal rights was imp for developing internet. Observations include:
-   Empowering women and girls- looking at their distinction and not grouping them as one group
-   Need to look at various groups their needs, what engagement models are needed
-   Prevailing gender disparity is a barrier to access
-   Culture and norms too have a big role to play