



Annual Techie Event, Port Elizabeth  
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**Keynote Address:**

**Taking Development to the People in Africa**

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**Reflections**

- *“I pointed you to the stars, and all you could see was the tip of my finger” – African saying*



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**Reflections....Our motivation (1)**

- *We shall prosper in a continent where the age old philosophy of “Ubuntu – I am because we are” is the guiding light.*
- We are Not Taking ICTs to the institutions, the People in Africa but taking to them efficiency, cost-effectiveness, competitiveness and especially human development
- The people of Africa are not looking for ICTs: they are looking for human development



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**Reflections....Our motivation (2)**

- ICTs should not symbolise technology: They should capture the essence of hope, and a reality of an exit to a better quality of life for our institutions, our people
- Why the techies? The challenge to us is even greater! What motivates us?
- *“It should never be that the anger of the poor should be the finger of accusation pointed at all of us because we failed to respond to the cries of the people for food, for shelter, for the dignity of the individual” – Nelson Mandela*



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**Reflections....The reality**

- *“The computer is a black box. I don’t know how it is made or where the printer colour ink comes from. I always strive to pay for this ink which takes half my monthly salary. Several times I tried to fill the toner cartridge with Chinese ink but it didn’t work. I even tried to use the traditional dye that my wife applied on cotton clothing....Am I doomed to be an eternal consumer spending my money continuously to purchase computer products?...” – S Ouédraogo, “The Computer and the Jembe”*



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**Reflections...Setting the stage (1)**

- Scientists, engineers, and generally “techies” - we tend to shield ourselves from the real challenges of our countries by living in the gadgets world – not different from the drug addicts who hide from reality in a drug induced euphoria
- We must step out of our normal protected world to consciously and simultaneously address the greater challenge: Are we introducing technology in the context that it will really enable human development?



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## Reflections...Setting the stage (2)

- If we stop only at the technology level, we shall be guilty of presenting ICTs like some modern Sangoma to replace the old Sangomas
- The real masters of this new Sangoma, those who own the technology, the patents, the software licenses will then control our destiny



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## Reflections...Our Challenge

- We shall talk about all aspects of information resource management
- We shall present beautiful, elegant solutions and good practice
- We shall, admit gaps, major challenges:
  - ◆ The resources allocated are not sufficient
  - ◆ “They” do not appreciate the critical role we play
  - ◆ We lack influence in our universities
  - ◆ The regulatory environments are bad
- Who will address these challenges?



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## Be the change you want to see in the world – Mahatma Gandhi

- As “techies”, we must step away from our traditional mold into our historical mold
- We must identify the real problems, gaps
- We must stop leaving the solutions, the leadership to “them”: we must be “them”
- We must be the change we want to see in our institutions, in our countries
- We must seek a new motivation by stepping into the development gap



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## Be the Change.. What is the gap? (1)

- **The cure cannot work unless the diagnosis is correct**
- *Cars are much more expensive than computers; and roads are very expensive to construct. And yet, there are more cars being bought than computers in many of our countries*
- *Our governments are investing heavily into improving and extending road infrastructure. Why?*



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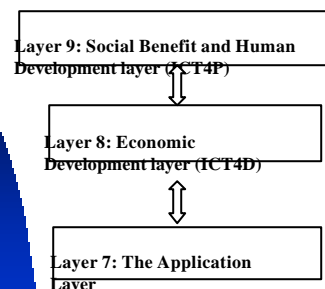
## Be the Change.. What is the gap? (2)

- There is a well understood linkage between ease and cost of transport on the one hand, and societal development and benefit on the other hand.
- There are goods to be transported
- A decision to buy a new truck costing \$50,000 is easier to take than a decision to install a 10 PC network at \$15,000
- **The Gap: The desert between those who understand technology and those who understand people and development must be populated**



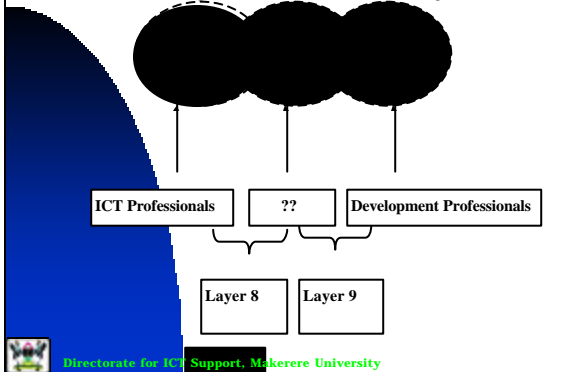
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## Be the Change..The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Layers (1)



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## Be the Change..The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Layers (2)



*Food for thought...*

- What is your role?
- ***"I am because we are"***
- ***THANK YOU!***

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