

## TECHNOLOGY

### Keyboard In Three Nigerian Languages Ready—Obasanjo

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President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday affirmed Nigeria's commitment to the recommendation of the World Information Society (WSIS) citing many new initiatives in the country's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector in the past few years, among them the development of a computer keyboard in the three dominant Nigerian languages.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Digital World African Conference 2006, holding at the Transcorp Hilton Abuja, Obasanjo told the gathering that a national software development taskforce has since advanced in developing strategies for software development in Nigeria leading to a keyboard for the three major Nigerian Languages of Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba.

The President who was represented by the Minister of Communication, Engr. Olufemi Anibaba, said "in line with our commitment to faithfully implement the recommendation of the WSIS, Nigeria has since commenced e-Nigeria initiatives geared towards such specific actions and projects as connecting communities, Vital educational institutions at all levels with ICT"

He said that 343 Local Government Areas (LGAs) have been provided with telecommunication infrastructure through the National Rural Telephone Programme.

"Thirty of our Universities presently have internet access, while a National Committee to work out the modalities for the computerisation of secondary schools in Nigeria has been set up," the President told his guest drawn from not less than 30 countries from all the continents. He added that all the aforementioned would be boosted by the \$100 dollar laptop initiative, which Nigeria has subscribed to.

"The Proposed Nigerian Telemedicine and other electronic health programme would involve the connection of health centres, hospitals, and major health institutions with ICTs," he said.

Obasanjo revealed that there is a public service Network (Psnet), aimed at providing intranet for Ministries, States and LGAs to a central hub in Abuja, adding that over 200 government organs have been registered with the .ng domain name.

"We expect that internet penetration will be increased with the setting up of the Internet Exchange Points, kick-started by government,

through the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) and the Internet Service Providers Association of Nigeria (ISPAN),” he enthused.

“These developments have significantly improved Nigeria presence in the Cyberspace”, he said.

In his speech the Minister of communication expressed delight at the calibre of the delegates.

He expressed Nigeria’s readiness to buy into the ICT revolution, and praised the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) project as the best way of getting children to learn.

In her remarks, the Executive Director of Growing Business Foundation (GBF), Ndidi Nnoli-Edozien, told the conference that the aim of the gathering is to brainstorm on how best to get poor nations of the world out of their poverty through the application of ICT. She told the hall that GBF is interested in investing in humanity, and cited some projects it has undertaken in the Niger Delta of Nigeria.

Prof. Nicholas Negroponte, the man who designed the \$100 dollar Laptop, made his remarks by asserting that the digital divide is a dangerous trend to humanity.

He said that the OLPC Project will accelerate the way children learn ICT in the least developed countries of the world.

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