

Jari Arkko's remarks at the "Policies Enabling Access, Growth and Development on the Internet" panel at the 9th IGF meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, September 2014

Thank you. I want to respond on the question of what types of policies and support organizations can help drive Internet access around the world.

But first I wanted to cite some numbers. My day job is with Ericsson, and my colleagues have been tracking the adoption of mobile broadband. At the end of Q2 this year, there were 6.8 billion mobile subscriptions for about 4.6 billion people, with 2.4 billion subscriptions being for mobile broadband. But the mobile broadband subscriptions are growing incredibly rapidly, with year over year growth rates ranging from 35% to 60%. And the number of smart phones out of all phones sold in Q2 is 65%, up from 55% last year. Obviously, the number of Internet users is growing very rapidly through the smartphone revolution, and it is likely that most of the current mobile users will become broadband and smartphone users. My colleagues predict over 7 billion mobile broadband subscriptions by 2019. And while places such as Africa trail the overall adoption numbers, they also have highest growth numbers.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are very good news. We must still work very hard for this, on technology, policy, and commercial fronts. But access to the Internet for the majority of people on the planet is, in my opinion, a goal that is within our reach.

But back to the approaches that could be helpful. I have three observations.

First, I think it would be a mistake to focus purely on access. A well working local Internet economy needs to consist of active users, access, connectivity, and services. It is crucial to ensure, for instance, that competitive situation allows efficient IXPs, fiber backbones, and connectivity, and that local business environments support the creation of services and local content, and that communities can build their local applications. Some of these things fall on the regulators; many would benefit from non-governmental organizations; all need collaboration across multiple stakeholders.

Second, some of the developing economies are entering the Internet age much later than other countries. But there is no need to follow the same steps. In a sense, the developing economies can and have jumped generations of technology, relying far more on various types of wireless technology, for instance, than fixed connections. In a sense you, not us, are now at the forefront of the new world, and you should take advantage of that.

Finally, we all need to continue to develop our processes and technology so that they can support the most challenging conditions, for instance sparsely populated areas or the most limited economic resources. There is still plenty to do.

Thank you,

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