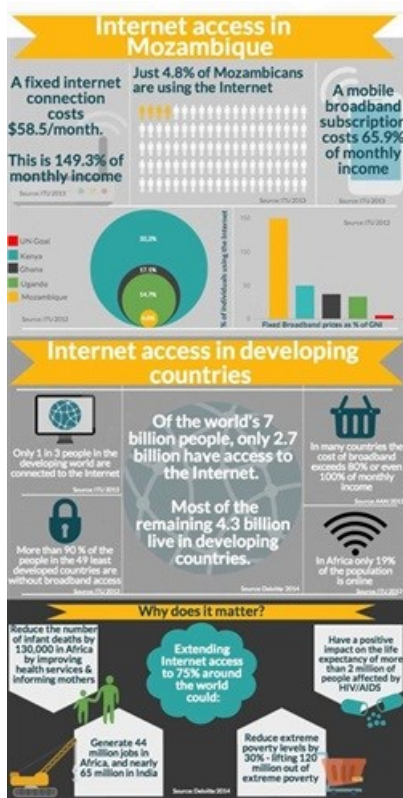# Leaders gather to promote affordable internet in Mozambique

Government leaders, policy makers, and technology industry players gathered recently in Maputo, Mozambique to develop policy recommendations that will drive down the cost of internet access in Mozambique - the first SADC country to be working with the Alliance for Affordable Internet.

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Affordable access to the internet will spark innovation in vital areas such as agriculture, health and education that will vastly improve the lives of ordinary Mozambican citizens. That waas the message late last week as leaders from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors gathered at the first Mozambican country forum organised by the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI).

Today, less than 5% of Mozambicans use the internet (source: ITU 2013). This is largely due to cost - while the country ranks as the world's 15th poorest, the price of a fixed broadband connection ranks as the world's fourth most expensive, and a basic mobile broadband subscription costs over 65% of average monthly income. Recognising the transformative potential of the internet, the Mozambican government recently became the third country to join A4AI, signing a formal memorandum of understanding with the Alliance in April. Mozambique joins Ghana and Nigeria in publicly committing to develop and implement key policy and regulatory changes designed to force down the cost of internet access for all.

Attendees

Attendees included the Honourable Minister Mr. Gabriel Muthisse (Ministry of Transport and Communication), as well as representatives from Instituto Nacional das Comunicações de Moçambique (INCM), Maputo's Science Innovation and ICT Research Institute (SIITRI), Vodacom, Internet Solutions, IREX, UK DFID and USAID.

The insight and experience of these attendees - and other senior figures from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors - was harnessed as they discussed and debated concrete policy areas that can reduce the cost of internet access. They worked to form a national coalition and hammered out a plan of action for reducing the cost of access in Mozambique. Guided by the global experience of its 60+ members - which include the likes of Cisco, Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Omidyar Network and Yahoo - and international best practice, A4AI will be working alongside the national coalition to support the development and implementation of the changes needed to make affordable broadband access for all a reality.