

Negative impact in delays to deploying LTE in Africa

By [Brandon Gregory](#)

18 Nov 2013

Stakeholders in Africa need to understand the detrimental effect delaying the licensing for LTE service rollout will have on the continent, according to Andile Ngcaba, founder of investment firm Convergence Partners.



© Tim via Fotolia.com

Speaking at AfricaCom 2013 in Cape Town last week, Ngcaba said: "AfricaCom of this year is happening at a very interesting time... It's happening at a time when the whole issue of internet governance is being discussed by almost every stake holder you can find in the world."

He said approximately two weeks ago the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) took place in Bali, Indonesia, which touched on the issues of internet governance. The issues ranged from human rights to technology.

Africa lagging behind

According to Ngcaba, Africa is lagging behind the rest of the world in terms of LTE licensing and is also lagging behind in the licensing of "digital dividend one" and in planning for "digital dividend two".

He said it is important for stakeholders in Africa to consider how the continent will be affected without LTE, as well as how it will impact the continent if licensing delays persist, especially with the advent of big data and the internet of everything (IoE).

Regarding voice as a communication aspect, Ngcaba said: "We are living in the world of data... by 2017/18 voice communications will be of charge."

Power poses a problem

Power also poses a problem in Africa, especially in connecting the next 200 million mobile phones, which are likely to be in

rural parts, which will bring the total number of African mobile subscribers to one billion.

"We will have to think about... more sophisticated ways than the way in which we provide electricity today," said Ngcaba.

The current methods of supplying electricity will be inefficient for the powering of rural base stations nor the devices in rural areas.

"Today we consume, as an industry, over two billion litres of fossil fuel to power base stations. We need to rethink how we do this because LTE, LTE Advanced, and digital dividend one and two... is going to require us to address power issues as far as infrastructure [is concerned]," said Ngcaba.

Important to develop and produce content

He said content and applications are both going to drive LTE, thus it is important to develop and produce content.

Regarding the issue of licensing LTE, Ngcaba described it as a sore point, and as a "big issue for the continent".

"The most important thing that we need to think about is that the issue of first come, first served is not going to serve the best interests of the continent... Given the background of the continent, we will need to look at much more smarter models in the way in which we will be licensing LTE," said Ngcaba.

According to Ngcaba, should the delays in implementing LTE persist, it will cost the industry approximately US\$100 billion in lost investments in the next five years.

This will negatively impact infrastructure building companies, fibre deployment to base stations, among many other players in the industry.

Ngcaba placed the blame for the delays on regulators and policy makers in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

Article published courtesy of [HumanIPO](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>