April 8, 2020

The Clerk of the Senate
Main Parliament Buildings
Parliament Road NAIROBI

Via email: csenate@parliament.go.ke
covid19@parliament.go.ke

Dear Sir,

Memorandum on COVID-19 Situation, from the Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet)

The Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet) is a multi-stakeholder platform for people and institutions interested and involved in ICT policy and regulation. The network aims to act as a catalyst for reform in the ICT sector in support of the national aim of ICT enabled growth and development.

ICTs are already playing a critical role in the management of the COVID-19 situation through information dissemination and availing tools that support business continuity, education and commerce just to mention a few. KICTAnet notes that it is important to support the continuity of activities such as learning, business and civic activities, and citizens' access to information.

Pursuant to the notice requesting for public input into the COVID-19 Situation, and after intense consultation with our stakeholders, and as an ICT community, we acknowledge that there are many suggestions necessary. However, our interest is in how ICTs can be utilized in the 3 thematic areas highlighted by the Senate COVID19 Adhoc Committee. KICTANet therefore largely confines itself to Tech Solutions for COVID-19 and propose the following:

1. **Internet Access**

Proposals	Approach(es)	Rationale
Affordable Internet	1. Reduce Internet tax. 2. Work with the private sector to reduce mobile internet cost. 3. Reduce tax on cost of devices. 4. Revisit electricity charges so that it is affordable to everyone. 5. Offer alternative sources of energy.	A big part of the economy relies on businesses that can continue running remotely. People are also getting public services online, and learning institutions are now relying on technology to continue their syllabi.
Network Resilience	Work with the private sector to improve the quality of mobile and internet networks across the country.	It is important to boost internet access and support business.
Universal Access	Channel the Universal Service fund (USF) to some of these rapid response initiatives.	This will allow for equity in access and opportunities for continuation of businesses and learning, as movement is limited. Secures jobs and income.
Policy(es) that will facilitate Universal Access	1. Develop policies that prioritize the Internet as a tool for offering basic services, such as a policy that allows for schools/students and hospitals access to a fast, stable and secure internet. 2. Policies that allow the private sector to support internet access as a public good. For example, having some 'internet days' would work so long as speeds are not throttled.	Equity in Access/Internet access for all.

Promote art at the county level	1. Release funds for artists to create and share content.	Combine Government and Community Structures to continuously inform, educate and possibly find ways of entertaining the Community in ways that will result in behavior change. Over communication is the key word.

2. **Covid information-related Access**

Proposals	Approach(es)	Rationale
Covid-19 Mapping	The ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ministry of (ICT) to collaborate with the tech community who already have tools to map the infection of the disease. This information can be collected anonymously from the affected persons to be used for mapping purposes only.	Helps the public make decisions about their daily movement.
Open Data Portal	The portal to act as a one-stop shop for information for citizens on Covid-19. It can contain statistics about the spread, measures that the government is taking, information on what people should do to avoid spreading the virus and what actions individuals can take.	Helps in distributing verified and accurate communication about coronavirus.
Implementing policies at community levels with citizen participation	The government has an elaborate structure from the County Commissioners to Chiefs to Chairman of Nyumba Kumi. Sharing of information through Whatsapp to identify needy cases, and those that might need food and other humanitarian support to survive should be supported.	Provides a mechanism of sharing and managing information on the pandemic in the most vulnerable areas.

	Whatsapp can be made totally free on all Networks to facilitate communication.	
Other means of communication	Use digital technologies to support developed communication in the counties. For example chiefs can communicate to the villages using community radios and televisions. The committee can explore mechanisms through which chiefs/sub chiefs can: 1. provide national updates and information in their areas. 2. Provide County-specific updates and information Residents can also use such platforms to: 3. raise concerns particular to their needs/area through their chiefs/sub chiefs, which can then be escalated upwards. 4. propose solutions for particular needs in their community 5. Authorities can also provide frequent, accurate updates in different languages on multiple platforms such as: social media, mainstream media, trusted community leaders - from credible sources.	Provision of accurate information at the county levels reduces the chances of spreading misinformation. Citizens in the counties are the most vulnerable to fake news because they have limited communication, and less skilled in fact checking stories. The offices of government authorities (chief and county commissioners) are also respected.
Using the Community networks	Identified community networks can disseminate this information in languages and in forms that the communities can understand. They can also provide county information and contact details of the authorities in charge.	The community networks offer additional mediums through which the government can communicate to masses. They can also offer other government programs such

		as school programs that are being run on TV stations.

3. Human Rights

Proposal	Approach(es)	Rationale
Provide/Publish policy guidelines	The Communications Authority and Ministry of health to issue policy guidelines on limitations of data protection and other rights limitations during this period.	Any tech related response, especially to do with surveillance should be necessary, proportionate and legitimate. On such measures, the government should exercise transparency through clear communication to the citizenry.
Human Dignity	Enforcement of policy measures should be done using non violent means. Explain to citizens how and why the measures are in place and allow citizen-leaders interaction on the same.	Ensures policies in place do not violate human rights