

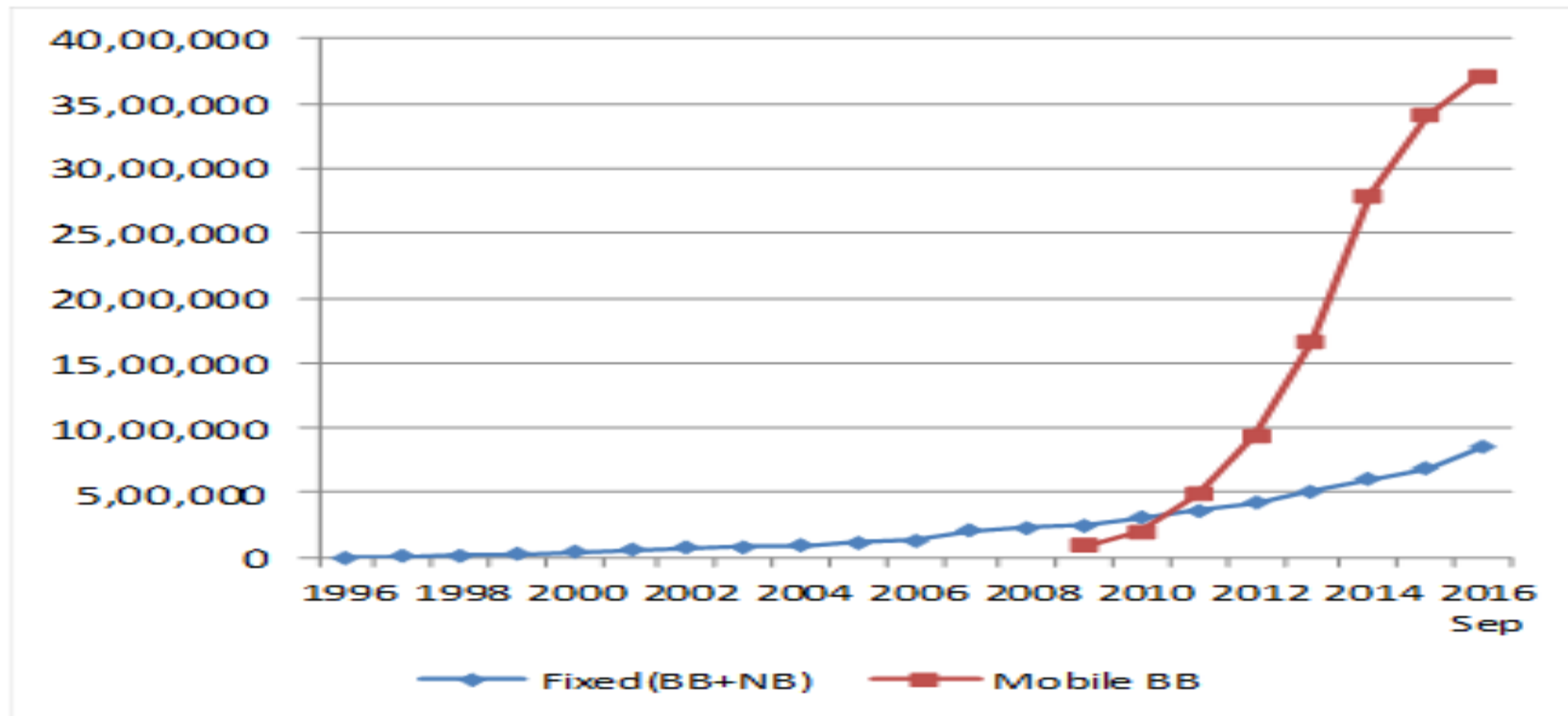
Digital rights & multi-stakeholderism

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IGF Sri Lanka, 18 May 2017



Foundation of digital rights: ICT networks



Broadband penetration was 22% in September 2016

Source: Telecom Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka

Sel. expenditures as % of mean monthly h'hold expenditure

2009/10	2012/13
31,331	41,144

	2009/10		2012/13	
	Amount (LKR)	As % of total household expenditure	Amount (LKR)	As % of total household expenditure
Telecom & Internet	749.84	2.4%	885.93	2.15%
Excursions & pilgrimages	225.64	0.7%	222.39	0.54%
Lotteries & betting	50.05	0.16%	48.6	0.12%
Books, newspapers & magazines	42.63	0.14%	62.22	0.15%

Source: HIES 2009/2010 & 2012/2013

Sri Lanka's Western Province foretells the future (2015 CPA survey)

- In leading Province (42% of economy and around 30% of population)
 - Private television is most popular source of news, followed by Facebook and the Internet/web
 - Facebook is main source of news for 18 - 24 year respondents followed by private television stations and the Internet/web

Kashmir & Cameroon bring up question of denial of access through network shutdowns



Gyanendra's Law

I propose a new law, named after the former King of Nepal: Gyanendra's Law. This law states that a regime that shuts down communication systems will not last.

However, like most 'social' laws, Gyanendra's Law has exceptions. Shutting down parts of networks does not count. The Rajapaksa government of Sri Lanka shut down networks in conflict areas and lives to tell the tale. Then again, there weren't that many telephones or internet connections in those parts to begin with, thanks to Prabhakaran. When a country has almost no landline and internet connections, the government can get away with shut-downs. This is the Than Shwe Exception, named after the leader of the country with the second lowest number of mobiles after North Korea.

Countries with least mobiles/100 people, 2009

	Mobile subscriptions per 100	CAGR, 2004-09 (%)	Mobile telephone sub-basket as a % of GNI per capita
D.P.R. Korea	0.29	-	
Myanmar	1	40.3	69.61
Kiribati	1.02	10.2	
Eritrea	2.78	47.8	
Marshall Islands	4.84	36	
Ethiopia	4.89	91.9	10.19
Cuba	5.54	52.3	
Solomon Islands	5.73	58.5	
Somalia	7.02	5.1	
Burundi	10.1	52.8	

Source: ITU/ICT Indicators Database, 2009.

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Announcement

Why multistakeholderism? Why
is ITU Model inadequate?

But the supply-side vision of the Secretary General does not see that as a concern:

Toure made it clear that the Dubai conference would be very much about broadband, how to get it to the billions who don't get it now and how to handle increasing bandwidth demands. It is mainly about connection to connectivity through telecommunications.

"We have some stake in the infrastructure side and not in the content and governance of the internet. Despite negative criticism, the conference is off to a good start," he said.

"We are a UN agency and whenever some people cannot solve their problems they come to ITU and express them and we pass on the message. We are the messenger. Being a messenger, we need not necessarily resolve the problems. We bring it to the attention of those who are supposed to solve it," he said.

It's not simply a difference between our vision and his. He is listening to "some people." The European incumbent operators. The state-owned operators in Francophone Africa. We are basing our position on research among the poor in Asia and Africa that shows that content drives demand; demand drives investment. It is also anchored on historical analysis that shows that settlement revenues did not build networks; competition did: as explained in a piece published in [Sri Lanka's Financial Times](#).

It's a pity the voices of those who are joining or about to join the Internet are not heard in the rarefied halls of the ITU Building in Geneva; only those of the suits who run the companies. It's a pity that lobbying counts for more than research.



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