

TELECOM REGULATORS, OPERATORS GEAR UP FOR INTERNET OF THINGS

Stakeholders in Africa's telecom space have reached a consensus on harnessing resources to ensure that the continent maximizes benefits from one of the most touted emerging technologies - Internet of Things.

Participants at a two-day maiden International symposium on ICT, which opened in Accra on [Monday](#), agreed that the alluring prospects of Internet of Things, which is a term used basically to describe connecting everyday items such as television sets to the internet, is revolutionizing economic and social models, requiring businesses to take advantage of the trend to aid decision making as governments liberate data to create public value.

It is estimated that the market generated by the Internet of Things will add about 21 billion connected gadgets in the next four years, signaling the next big possible opportunity and the impact on businesses.

An executive of Vodafone Ghana, Samuel Bartels, inferring from recent survey findings by Vodafone, explained that about three-quarters of businesses around the world now rate Internet of Things highly, which they believe will be critical to business processes.

He said already about one-third of businesses run their entire operations on Internet of Things while others use the technology to support large scale operations, which points to the disruptive nature of Internet of Things.

"Enterprises are seeing dramatic results. About 63 percent say they've seen significant return on investment, and on the average they measure a 20% improvement in metrics like revenue, cost, downtime and utilization," he said.

He thus urged telecom regulators on the continent, most of whom were participants at the Symposium, to address challenges of resources especially spectrum to help telecom businesses to utilize and actualize the benefits of Internet of Things.

Mr. Bartels, however, expressed concern that privacy and security issues present significant challenges to the adoption of Internet of Things, a position that was supported by other speakers at the Symposium.

Dr. Jason Whalley, a professor of Digital Economy at the Newcastle Business School in the United Kingdom, agreed that the far reaching impact of Internet of Things will improve the delivery and efficiency of existing products and services, but also feared that data privacy and security could be the Achilles heels to the critical mass deployment and adoption of the

technology.

Mr. Alidrssa Badiel of the International Telecommunication Union also noted that the volume of data being generated presents a huge challenge to the utilization of internet of Things as surveys show that only about eight percent of businesses are fully capturing and analyzing Internet of Things data in a timely fashion.

He noted that while there are technical challenges to the deployment perspectives, other non-technical issues like privacy, access and security are issues that need to be addressed.