

## Foreword

A little over 30 years ago, President Hilla Limann of Ghana placed a phone call to the accompaniment of brass bands, musketeers, and masqueraders at Kuntunse on the outskirts of the capital, Accra. *The Event*—the phone call—to 10 Downing Street, the British Prime Minister’s Office—was carried live on national television. Never mind that Mrs. Margaret Thatcher had stepped out and the President had to leave a message; it did in no way dim the significance of *The Event*. It was the first call to be made by international direct dial in Ghana and one of the first in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Fast forward: By 2016, Africa will have an estimated 1 billion mobile phone connections: a mobile phone for nearly every person. More significantly, an increasing number of Africans are migrating from feature phones to smartphones and accessing the Internet. In combination with increasing digitization of systems throughout Africa, albeit with varying degrees of enthusiasm across the continent’s disparate geographies, these miniaturized computers are yielding bottomless depths of knowledge at ever more incalculable speeds to more people on the continent than could ever have been computed or dreamed of, even just two decades ago.

What does this Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution mean for Africa’s social and economic policymakers? What are its implications for her economies and societies? Will it *improve* the everyday lives of the continent’s peoples, and how should *improvement* be defined, and by whom?

For one, Mayiga (this volume) is nervous about the social cost to Africa of mandatory analogue-digital television migration. Might he be missing the long-term opportunities that could be gained from additional spectrum yields? Mawuko (this volume) also challenges the ICT-driven development paradigm, fearing further perpetuation of unequal West versus Africa relations. On the other hand, Philips et al. (this volume) appear more sure-footed about the value rural communities can derive from ICT if the tools are locally contextualized. Kim (this volume) ponders state and private sector synergies and pronounces a favourable verdict if Korean and Kenyan experiences are anything to go by.

Africa and Revolution are not entirely strange bedfellows. Dr. Lloyd Amoah, a man with a large intellectual appetite and editor of this seminal work, has carefully assembled, in this single forum, 23 authors from 18 academic and corporate institutions located on 4 continents to ponder an African revolution of a more cerebral variety.

One thing is certain: this work is itself a beneficiary of the tools and fruits of the global Knowledge Economy, without which its compilation would have required substantially more resources without any guarantees that the critical questions and answers raised, and their sweep and depth as contained in these pages, would have been matched.

*Kwaku Addo Sakyi-Addo*  
*Ghana Chamber of Telecommunications, Ghana*  
*November 2013*

**Kwaku Addo Sakyi-Addo** is the founding CEO of the Ghana Chamber of Telecommunications. He worked previously as a journalist and radio and TV broadcaster working for the BBC, Reuters, as well as other local media. Sakyi-Addo has been published in the *Economist*, the *Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, the *Mail on Sunday*, and the *Telegraph* in the UK. He has interviewed Ban Ki Moon and his predecessors, Kofi Annan and Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Larry King, former US President Jimmy Carter, rock star Bono, and scores of African and global political, business, and cultural leaders. He was twice been Journalist of the Year in Ghana. Sakyi-Addo studied Communications at the Ghana Institute of Journalism, the University of Ghana, the University of Wales, Cardiff, and the International Institute of Journalism in Berlin. He is a Fellow of the World Press Institute at Macalester College, St. Paul Minnesota, and a Foundation Fellow of the Africa Leadership Initiative of the Aspen Institute and the prestigious Salzburg Seminar in Austria. In 2008, the Government of Ghana awarded him the Order of the Volta, one of the country's highest honours.