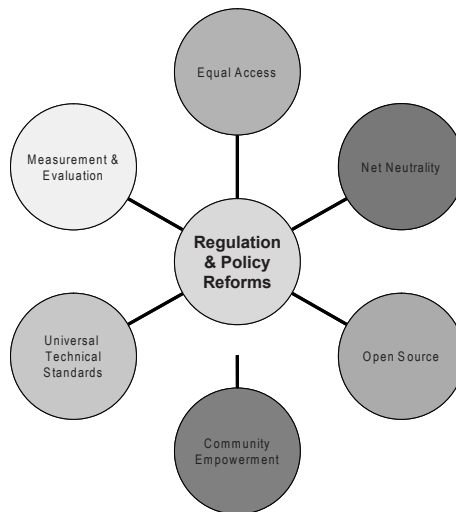


## Chapter III

# Regulation and Policy Reforms



*“The government managed to create a situation whereby to use and be associated with ICTs was fashionable across the population, not only among the young people. This broad-based support allowed the topic of information society building to be above usual party political fights” (Estonia, Archives of the ICF, 2007, p. 8).*

**Overview:** This chapter examines the following ideas on regulation and public policy:

- Information societies are enabled by regulations and public policies that support open communications;
- Government, business and public sector collaboration is key to establishing policies that lead to economic and social development;

- Open source applications, products and collaborative culture are accelerated by adopting universal technical standards;
- To be sustained, accessibility to the Internet and keeping it free and open requires some vigilance;
- Ways must be devised to assess the local impact of policy and regulations and to provide next steps.

## THE FREE FLOW OF KNOWLEDGE

**Key Concept:** *The fate of nations, communities and their enterprises are intertwined. For corporations to be competitive and for communities to be value-adding societies, national governments and associated agencies must cooperate to ensure that ICT infrastructure is enabled by regulations and public policies that support open communication.*

In Jared Diamond's book, *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (1999), the author explores the question of why it was that 62 soldiers from Europe mounted on horses with the aid of 106 foot soldiers conquered the Inca Empire, rather than the other way around. Diamond's take is that the Spanish had ships and the Incas did not. Also, invader Francisco Pizarro had prior knowledge of the Incas because the Spanish had been to the New World, while no Inca had ever been to Europe.

Unlike the Incas, the Spaniards had writing, which made documentation and communication easier. Pizarro was an informed military man in a literate society; thus he knew about the successful strategies of Cortez, who had earlier conquered the Aztec Empire. Literacy, information, communication and such advanced technologies as ships, horses and gunpowder gave Pizarro a conqueror's advantage.

Diamond argues that lesser developed societies are not less competitive because their populations are intellectually inferior or less capable. For reasons of geography, resources, cultural heritage, political structures, and perhaps medicine, those societies simply have not had the same opportunities as their more developed counterparts. Under different circumstances, the Inca King Atahualpa with 80,000 troops might indeed have been the conquerors of Spain.

Diamond raises one of the central questions of world economics: why are countries like the United States and Switzerland so rich, while other countries like Paraguay and Mali are so poor? Why is it that the per-capita gross national products (GNP) of the world's richest countries are more than 100 times those of the poorest countries? According to Diamond:

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