

Universal, ubiquitous,
equitable, affordable

Notes for opening comments at
session DS15 by Rohan
Samarajiva

Universality achieved?

- 1984 Maitland Report put universal access on the agenda
 - A telephone within 2 hours walking distance
- In a 2005 sample survey of teleuse at the BOP in five countries (India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand) we found that
 - Over 90% had used a phone in past 3 months
 - Over 65% had a phone within 5 mts in Sri Lanka; around 60% in Pakistan and over 55% in India (Thailand and Philippines obviously higher)
 - Only 5% in Pakistan and 2% in India said they had to go more than an hour

Service or access?

- Of the BOP users, only a few own the instrument they use
 - 19% in India
 - 36% in Pakistan
 - 41% in Sri Lanka
 - 62% in the Philippines
 - 77% in Thailand
- As a result, they seem to be making less calls than they otherwise would, and spend more

Ubiquity?

- Can do anything anywhere
- Narrower definition
 - Can do voice/SMS anywhere
- Less than 7% non-owners in five countries give lack of network as a reason

Equity?

- No one is paying more than another similarly situated?
 - BOP sample seems to be spending more than reported ARPUs, despite making less calls
 - Poverty premium
 - Caused by going through intermediaries who have to make a living

Affordability?

- How defined?
 - Percentage of income?
- Very clearly the old standard of 1-3% of income does not apply
- People at the BOP are spending over 5% of income on connectivity
- With many telcos now earning good returns on ARPUs as low as USD 5, there is less to worry about in this area