

Informal stakeholder consultation on the review of the implementation of the Outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society - 19th October 20156

Panel 1 ICT for Development

As stated in the zero draft of the UNGA's overall review of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, significant and worthwhile progress has been achieved over the past 10 years in the diffusion of ICT throughout the developing world. Its positive effects have been demonstrated especially in the major areas of e-government, health, education, agriculture and fisheries in a number of developing countries.

However, the availability of new and cheaper technologies and the ongoing rollout of internet connectivity have NOT led to their universal application or their effective integration across the social and economic arenas in ways that are commensurate with the potential of these technologies to contribute to the development of Knowledge societies.

Role of ICT in Education

In line with the MDG goals, great progress has been made in the provision of primary schools and in the rates of pupil attendance across African countries. However, this success has led to a shortage of quality teachers and poorer facilities and resources. Increasing pupil populations are leading to very large class sizes and a poorer quality of education. As a result, literacy and numeracy levels are dropping across Africa and other developing regions.

“Inclusive and equitable access to a quality education *and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*” is goal 4 of the SDGs. This goal was also emphasised in item 5 of the **Incheon Declaration at the World Education Forum 2015 - *Towards 2030: a new vision for Education***. However, the Incheon declaration does not contain any worthwhile reference to ICT and its potential to facilitate necessary change in education provision.

In general, there is a low level of awareness of the potential of ICT and its integration in education to address issues such as:

1. teacher quality and sense of professionalism
2. teaching and learning resources where the majority of children do not have access to textbooks

3. adding value to the curriculum in general to enrich learning
4. ensuring greater student achievement in science, technology and innovation subject areas.
5. facilitating 21st Century skills development
6. Ameliorating the negative learning effects of very large class sizes
7. making the administration of education more efficient.

Whole school integration of ICT has the potential to reform education through ICT-based teacher training and the provision of a richer and more equitable learning environment. This is a long-term but fundamental reform if developing countries are to become knowledge societies

Safety online

Widespread access to internet content by students in schools and outside schools has created a curricular need to address online safe and the ethical use of the internet.

Community literacy and numeracy

There is need for some bold initiatives to deal with growing illiteracy and innumeracy. Through the planned and innovative use of ICT, literacy & numeracy skills can be acquired on a mass scale and in an inter-generational manner at community /village level.

Youth unemployment and ICT

Given the growing unemployment rate among youth across African and the Developing world, there is a critical need to reform the outdated curriculum in technical colleges by integrating digital technologies across all skills areas as well as providing technology - based skills courses for the new technology-driven employments. Relevant technical and vocational skills development are crucial to the development of knowledge societies.

Capacity Building

Capacity building is a pre-requisite for Knowledge Society planning and development. This is recognised in Goal 17 of the SDGs and includes distributed leadership development from Government Ministries to regional and local authorities and organisations and to school principals. Coherent policies and implementation strategies of developing countries at every level should incorporate the key drivers of Knowledge Society development - ICT use and integration, Science, Technology and Innovation, ICT-enabled Education, e-Government and broadband infrastructure and distribution.

In summary

ICT is central to the provision of an equitable, accessible and inclusive education system. ICT is also a central ingredient in capacity development for Knowledge Society advancement.

It is critically important that, at this early stage of the post 2015 agenda, close linkages are established between WSIS Action lines, *The Education For All Initiative* and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure that ICT and

its integration is understood and supported as central to the development of Knowledge Societies across Africa and other developing countries.

Impact indicators

An explicit statement is recommended in relation to the development of impact indicators and outcomes for the SDGs and interfaced with a results assessment framework which should be developed for the WSIS Action Lines. Donors and partners in development initiatives demand results and outcomes. The development of impact indicators for the SDGs would be helpful.

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