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| Report on the GLOBAL ICT CAPACITY BUILDING SYMPOSIUM (CBS) 2016 | | |

**Summary:**

The document provides a summary of the Global ICT Capacity Building Symposium (CBS), held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 6-8 September 2016. The Symposium was held under the theme “Embracing capacity building opportunities in the digital era” and featured a number of high-level policy debates on how education and training in the field of ICTs will contribute towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Delegates agreed on a number of conclusions and recommendations for future work in the field of ICT capacity building by the national and international community.

**Action required:**

TDAG is invited to note this report and provide guidance as deemed appropriate.

**References:**

Dubai Action Plan, Objective 4, Output 4.1

**Introduction**

The Global ICT Capacity Building Symposium (CBS) is the main global event for capacity development in the field of information and communication technology (ICT). The Symposium brings together stakeholders from across the world to discuss trends and developments in the sector and their implications for human and institutional capacity building. CBS initially focused only on matters related to human resources and thus was targeted mainly to human resources practitioners. It has since broadened its scope to embrace human and institutional capacity building, drawing on a global network of expertise from different regions and stakeholders.

**CBS-2016**

The 2016 Global ICT Capacity Building Symposium (CBS-2016) took place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 6 to 8 September 2016. It was organized by the International Telecommunication Union and hosted by the Communications Authority of Kenya. The theme of the Symposium was “Embracing capacity building opportunities in the digital era”.

The Symposium attracted around 440 participants from 46 countries, public and private organizations, universities and research institutions, and other regional and international organizations. Several Ministers and other high-level representatives from public and private entities attended the Symposium.

The Symposium was preceded by two pre-events on 5 September 2016; the first one entitled “Capacity building in Internet Governance: Stakeholder perspectives” and the second one entitled “Regulators as enablers and beneficiaries of capacity building”.

The Symposium explored a number of topics, including:

* the role of capacity building in ICTs for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
* fostering stakeholder partnerships between suppliers of training and the consumers of training
* the emerging technologies in the digital era and the associated skills challenges
* the new learning opportunities brought about by these new technologies
* the role of Academia in driving innovation as well as providing capacity building solutions for the digital era, and
* the role of the ITU Centres of Excellence in supporting global capacity building.

**Ministerial Roundtable**

The Ministerial Roundtable held on the first day of the Symposium highlighted the critical role of ICTs as an enabler of education noting that they provide educational content in new, better and more effective ways. Ministers recognized that ICTs provided huge opportunities for the education sector as a whole and could address important policy goals such as access to education for everyone.

Ministers also highlighted the importance of linking ICT policies and education policies, in order to address the institutional reforms necessary for ensuring the availability of the skills required in the digital society. A priority in this regard is the need to ensure capacity building in ICT is integrated in education.

**Centers of Exellence**

A special session was dedicated to the Centers of Excellence (CoE) model and the ITU Academy, also introducing the work of the Group on Capacity Building Initiatives (GCBI). Several CoEs shared their experience and models of partnerships in training, which was considered as a successful model for the delivery of capacity building in the field of ICT. Industry partners offered support and expressed interest in collaboration with the ITU Centres of Excellence. CoEs were urged to seek funding support from partners (both Government and industry). It was noted that alignment of training to industry requirements increased chances of recruitment of graduates from the CoEs. Delegates urged ITU to continue supporting the Centres of Excellence, and work towards strengthening their training delivery capabilities.

**Main conclusions**

Delegates acknowledged that there were many stakeholders that played a role in developing ICT capacities at the national, regional and global level. These stakeholders need to work together to establish synergies in capacity building initiatives in order to achieve the greatest impact.

Panellists further observed that while the digital economy will create many jobs, including among small and medium-sized enterprises, a huge digital skills gap is looming and one of the ways to mitigate this gap is to stimulate investments in the development of ICT capabilities in the new areas that demand new sets of skills.

Delegates noted that the digital economy is also creating learning opportunities through technology tools such as mobile technology and massive open online courses (MOOCs) that could be leveraged for learning. MOOCs represent a viable channel to expand training opportunities to gain skills and improve people’s competitiveness in the labour market.

The Symposium observed that regulators play an important role in facilitating skills development in the ICT sector and in other sectors. Digital inclusion should include imparting relevant ICT knowledge and skills. Universal Service Funds could be used to support digital skills programmes and initiatives in the digital economy.

CBS-2016 highlighted that partnerships amongst stakeholders, especially between public and private sectors are important for capacity building programmes to be successful. The ITU Centres of Excellence model was mentioned as a good example of a capacity building partnership that should be supported and promoted.

The Symposium made particular note of the importance of collaboration in capacity building between industry and academia. Universities were urged to adopt new innovative teaching methodologies that are in line with the recent developments in ICT, and prepare their professors for the needs of the millennials.

**Exhibition**

During CBS - 2016, an exhibition took place showcasing capacity building projects and activities across the world and best practices from academia and industry players. Member states, sector members, Universities and Centres of Excellence took advantage of allocated free space to exhibit their products and services.

**Pre-event “Capacity building in Internet governance: Stakeholders perspectives”**

This pre-event brought together ICT professionals and executives from Government ministries, Regulatory Authorities, UN Organisations, private sector companies, Universities and research institutions as well as global and regional bodies dealing with Internet Governance. The event highlighted that capacity building on Internet Governance (IG) was an important focus area and further work should be carried out in this field. Participants agreed that the multi-stakeholder approach to capacity building in IG is essential and needs to be part of all IG-related activities at the global, regional and national levels.

Panellists highlighted that Internet governance awareness and capacity building is important for a wide range of beneficiaries, including future leaders, policy makers, diplomats, the business and the technical community, law enforcement authorities, young professionals, the media, and end users. They also highlighted the need to cover a broad scope of topics on the one hand, and at the same time take an in-depth, focused approach to capacity building, targeting specific users.

The event made a number of specific recommendations to ITU with respect to its future work on capacity building in Internet governance, including to continue work with all stakeholders, increase engagement with academia and universities to train the next generation and improve research, and work with governments to enhance their awareness and engagement with other stakeholders.

**Pre-event “Regulators as enablers and beneficiaries of capacity building”**

This pre-event discussed capacity building challenges faced by regulators in light of the fast evolving ICT sector that is experiencing the introduction of new technologies at an unprecedented pace. The session also explored the role that regulators could play in ICT capacity building both within the ICT sector and across other sectors.

Panellists noted that new technologies brought new regulatory challenges for regulators and hence the need for continual upgrading of skills of employees. Some of the skills arising from new technologies are skills to regulate over-the-top (OTT) applications and services.

Panellists stressed that regulators should facilitate capacity building for the ICT sector as a whole. They should develop ICT capacity at the national level through programmes such as digital skills programmes, and should utilize Universal Service Funds for such capacity building activities. By assuming an active role in capacity building, regulators are in a position to influence the alignment of training to the needs of the regulatory authorities and the ICT sector.

Delegates emphasized the need for a multi-stakeholder approach in regulatory capacity building. It was recommended that certain positions within regulatory authorities be filled by persons from academia and industry for a certain duration to inject their respective experiences to the regulators.

Finally, delegates urged ITU to take advantage of its close relation with national Governments and regulatory authorities to ensure that regulators take a more active role in ICT capacity building across all sectors.

The main conclusions and recommendations agreed upon by CBS-2016 and its pre-events are available on the CBS website at <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Capacity-Building/Pages/CBS-2016.aspx>.

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