WSIS Action Line C4: Capacity Building

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The WSIS outputs on capacity building emphasized that "each person should have the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge in order to understand, participate actively in, and benefit fully from, the Information Society and the knowledge economy."

ICTs can contribute to achieving universal education worldwide, through delivery of education and training of teachers, and offering improved conditions for lifelong learning, encompassing people that would normally be outside the formal education process, and improving professional skills, including ICT skills. What is particularly interesting is that the use of ICTs can act in a recursive manner, where the continued and ongoing use of ICTs increases and deepens a user’s critical reading of information and knowledge that is accessed, managed, integrated, created, and communicated through ICTs. In other words, ICTs can make you smarter and the smarter you are the better you can leverage the use of ICTs.

The WSIS outputs identified a number of key initiatives that should be undertaken to promote capacity building vis-à-vis ICTs. But going forward, we need to be mindful that much has changed since WSIS. For example, we have seen a tremendous growth in topics such as e-learning – in fact, the largest universities in the world are now online universities. Another interesting trend is the increasing promotion and availability of freely available open education resources pioneered by organizations such as UNESCO, MIT and the UK’s Open University. Another area we expect to see a growing potential is mobile learning. Finally, with the increased availability of broadband, we are seeing a rapid growth in video-based learning – a good example is Khan Academy which was started by an MIT student and has in its short existence delivered more than 30 million lessons to more than 200,000 users each month.

We know that there is a tremendous opportunity in the WSIS facilitation process to bring greater awareness about these new initiatives and developments and we are looking forward to facilitating the sharing of best practices and knowledge with others at the next WSIS Forum Meeting.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.